DÜRR'S COLLECTION OF STANDARD

AMERICAN AND BRITISH AUTHORS.

EDITED

BY

WILLIAM E. DRUGULIN.

VOL. 49.

THE CAVALIER.

BY

G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.

VOL. II.

LEIPZIG: A. DÜRR.

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THE CAVALIER.

A HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY

G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "LORD MONTAGU'S PAGE," "LEONORA D'ORCO," "REVENGE," "THE OLD DOMINION," &c., &c., &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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A HISTORICAL ROMANCE

THE CAVALIER

"THE OLD DOMINION," &c. &c. &c.

AUTHOR OF "LORD MONTAGU'S PAGE," "LEONORA D'ORCO," "ERNESTO,"

THE CAVALIER.

CHAPTER I.

We who write books—ay, even the best of us—are very much accustomed to confine our painting to a single character, instead of giving a broad view of human nature. It is especially the characteristic of the present school and day; but it has always been so, more or less, in every branch of art when it was touching its decline. Murillo lowered himself from heaven's queen and hosts of angels to beggar boys of Seville. Raphael descended —if Raphael could descend—to portrait painting; and Phidias would leave the mightier triumphs of his art to hew a single Grace.

Perhaps he was right. The mind of man is narrow, and can hardly comprehend the larger views of things The portraits of a hump-backed pot boy, well limned with every patch or speck of dirt upon his coat; a queer costermonger, with a catalogue of every carrot and turnip in

his cart, and a glossary of his peculiar dialect, will please more than "Milton's Paradise Lost" or "Tasso's Gerusalemme"—and rightly, too; for the mass of mankind are of small minds, and small minds cannot take in large subjects.

Of course I speak not of myself; for heaven knows I have but rarely and incidentally attempted anything like large views—then, even quietly attempting to insinuate them upon the reader's consideration, with a sneaking sort of timidity, instead of making them the end and object of the book; but in this work I have especially devoted all my efforts to paint one character, "The Cavalier," and have drawn the ideal from the real; for few will read these pages who have any knowledge of English history without identifying the character of Lord Dartmoor with that of one who lived and wrought and gloried in the times of "the great rebellion."

But this sort of character-painting has its inconveniences, too, as well as its facilities. What am I to do, now that he is off the scene? Having made him the prominent figure, with a very sketchy background, having toned down all accessories, and yet not finished the picture, where are the touches to go which must complete the work?

The only way is to follow history and nature, and work the picture out.

It was the evening of the second day after Lady Langdale arrived at Buckley when the whole party sat in the large drawing-room, upon the first—not the ground-floor of the mansion. The heavy wooden window shutters were up, and indeed had never been taken down; or it was advisable to keep the house as much in the

ancient state as possible. The men and the horses were concealed about the stables, and only one had gone out at a time to procure provisions or to make inquiries as to ships upon the sea coast or in the Wash, capable of carrying away a large party from those disastrous shores. Young Henry Langdale was there, with his hand bandaged up, but evidently recovering from his wound; and Lady Langdale and Lucy, very sad, but calm. There, too, sat Sir Edward Langdale, with an open book before him, reading the evening service of the church to his children and his wife—finding that strength and consolation in prayer to the All Powerful, which can but be found in him when our own strength and power fail. There were some of the servants, too, in the holy equality of worship—the only equality that earth can really ever know, except the equality of the grave.

He finished and closed the book; and then advancing to Lucy's side, he said, in the tones of gentle parental love,

"Let us hope, my child. I know that a state of doubt is often more painful than a fatal certainty; but yet it is necessary for you to view things as they really are. Our gallant Bernard may have fallen; he may be a prisoner in the enemy's hands; but he may be safe, he may be free. Not long ago, I was forced to wander for months through this land with hardly where to lay my head; and yet I rejoined you all safely, and am here this day. I would not encourage hope, Lucy; for, as I told you, I saw his horse and himself fall, in the midst of the enemy; but I would discourage despair; for many a man, in worse plight than that, survives for after happiness."

"If he be dead," said Lucy, "I would fain see where

they have laid him, and let my tears fall upon his grave. If he be living, a captive or wounded, I would fain be with him. Think, dear father, what may be his sufferings even now, and how he may long for some support!" and she murmured, while the tears overflowed her eyelids, the words of his own song,

"Where is that love, while sad and mangled lying,
On the dark battle field my limbs are cast,
And my crushed heart for long gone moments sighing
Turns faintly back into the happy past."

"What comfort might not his poor Lucy be to him even now?"

"My child, you hardly understand a man's heart," said Sir Edward Langdale. "If Bernard is alive and free, we shall soon see him; but if he be wounded or a prisoner, he would far rather bear his lot alone, whatever it might be, than see you exposed to all the terrible circumstances which your love might prompt you to encounter for his sake—see who is that below," he continued, turning to one of the servants, several of whom were still in the room, "I hear a step upon the terrace.

The man hurried out; and Sir Edward with the rest sat and listened somewhat eagerly; for every one there present well knew that the fate of each and all depended on a moment, or on the most trifling accident.

They had to wait in that sort of painful expectation for several minutes, however; for many were the precautions taken at the gates at Buckley before any one was admitted, and signs and countersigns were given, as if the place had been a fort; but at length steps came up the stairs, and the servant returned, followed by good old Pierrot, booted and spurred from a journey.

"So soon back, Pierrot!" exclaimed Sir Edward Langdale; "I fear you have failed."

But the man's countenance was gay, and he answered,

"No, no, Sir Edward. I have succeeded. There is a ship—a little one enough, it is true, but still it is a ship; and you have travelled in less I trow;—but a ship is lying at Lynn. The master is a good hearty old Cavalier, and has willingly hired himself to carry over some friends of King Charles. When the tide serves to-morrow, which is about eleven o'clock, he says he will up anchor and sail along the coast, so that if there are some people on the sands, about three o'clock, and they raise a red flag, he will send off a boat to take them on board."

To every one but poor Lucy this was welcome news, but the thought of leaving the shores of England in ignorance of Bernard's fate, and with every reason for the darkest apprehension, came cold to her heart, though she would not by a word of entreaty or remonstrance have imperilled the safety of her brother or her father. A deep sigh was the only utterance she gave to her grief; and Sir Edward proceeded to inquire if Pierrot had found the roads clear, or if the news of the recent battle, now known over the whole land, had created any confusion which might impede their journey early on the following morning.

"All quiet, sir," answered Pierrot; "above Lynn I saw some good folks in knots of six or seven, but on this side there were less people than usual. Indeed, for the last two miles, I only met with one person, and that was odd enough."

Sir Edward Langdale took no notice of the last part

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of the reply; but Lady Langdale, who was more timid, asked,

"How was it odd, Pierrot?"

"Why, miladi, I saw the fellow twice, close by the gate here," said the man. "I saw him quite plain by the moonlight; and if I am not much mistaken it was that lad we saw at the tavern, to whom I gave a groat—the same bad young fellow whose baby died when we were at the cottage."

Lucette laid her hand suddenly on her husband's arm, saying:

"Listen to him, Edward! The place where we saw this man is more than twenty miles distant. He must have traced us hither."

Sir Edward asked some questions, and seemed satisfied with the answers; but Lucette, who knew him better than any one there, saw a slight shade come over his brow, from which she augured rightly that all was not quite at ease within.

With very loving hearts, it is often a fault to accuse oneself unjustly, if anything goes wrong, in cases where we must act and others must suffer.

Lucette marked the shade upon her husband's brow, and scanned closely all the events which had occurred upon the road in which the young man spoken of by Pierrot had been concerned, without discovering that she had been in error; but still she thought that somehow she must have done wrong. But Edward Langdale, as I have before said, loved as dearly as when she had first given herself to him.—There be some who do not and cannot believe this—a few women and many men—but his love, if not founded and directed simply by esteem,

had been strengthened, nourished, perpetuated by respect. We may love a fool for an hour, but no man of sense can love a fool long. In the end, Reason triumphs over Passion.

"Let us take some repose, my love, and set out before daybreak," he said; "I like not this youth's having followed your party; but in such a long and hurried ride, some traces of your course must have been left. You and Lucy retire. Henry must get some sleep if he can. I will give orders that a strict watch be kept; but I trust that, as his Majesty has escaped towards Lyme, Cromwell's attention will be diverted in another course. Now, try for repose—good Heaven! what is that?"

"A petard, Sir Edward," said Pierrot coolly. "You should know the sound right well. Shall we stand to our arms? We are enough to maintain the house till to-morrow night if they be not in large force."

Before the knight could answer, a number of terrified servants from below rushed into the room by the door on his left hand; and Lady Langdale and Lucy, who were already moving to retire to rest, found the other exit closed by a body of grisly musketeers, with matches lighted.

"Down with your arms!" cried a loud and peremptory voice on the right, as a still larger party of armed men followed the affrighted servants into the room; "down with your arms, or we fire!"

"You are in a great hurry," said Sir Edward Langdale, without moving a muscle; "let me know who commands, and perhaps I may obey."

"Who commands: The Lord General, of course,"

replied the soldier; "he will be here anon. Down with your arms, I say."

"They are but few," replied the knight, "and such as every gentleman has a right to wear; but as you say the Lord General commands you, to him you are answerable."

Thus saying, he placed his sword and pistols on the table, as did all the rest. Then advancing to his wife's side, he kissed her, and said:

"You had better retire to rest, my love.—These men, of course, will not attempt to stop a lady."

"I opine we must stop every one," said a tall, thin man, in not very military attire; "we have heard that the young Charles Stuart is here, and woman's garments sometimes cover as malignant vipers as he."

"You have heard very wrong," said Sir Edward, coolly; "please God, King Charles is far beyond your reach. But these are ladies—my wife and daughter—and do not look like hardy Cavaliers, I trow."

At that moment another man, apparently an officer, by his dress, pushed by the man at the door, and advanced toward Sir Edward Langdale, saying:

"What is all this? they have offered no violence, I hope?"

"Not actual violence," replied the knight; "but though we have all given up our swords, they would fain prevent these ladies from retiring to their rooms, fearing that a wimple or a hood may conceal the person of the King."

"We have good information that he is here," said the officer, "but methinks, from all I have heard, he is not much like either of those ladies. They may go; but as

I perceive this house is divided into corridors, they must submit to have a sentry at the end of that which they inhabit—at least till the Lord General arrives."

"I beseech you, sir, wake them not, even when he does arrive," answered Sir Edward, with an air of greater coolness than perhaps he felt. "We have been somewhat startled already to-night by a loud explosion, from which I fear my gates have suffered."

"It was needful to blow them open," answered the other, with a grim smile, "since a petard was the only porter we seemed likely to find. Ladies, good-night! Nay, neither words nor signs, if you please," and, not without some show of courtesy, he handed Lucy and her mother to the door.

"Now, sir," he continued, returning to Sir Edward, "we must dispose of you and your followers for a few hours, till your case is passed upon by a power superior to mine. We have certain information that those ladies, with several horsemen, passed from Worcester to St. Neots, three nights ago, having young Charles Stuart in their company."

"Your certain information is wrong, sir," replied the knight; "not one of them, that I know of, has ever been at Worcester. My wife, my daughter, and their maid, with a small body of men for their protection, scampered away to St. Neots, probably to be out of the way of strife; but that they ever had his Majesty in their company, or that he is here now, I know to be false. You can search the whole house if you please. It is of very simple construction."

"We have taken care of all that," replied the officer,

with a significant nod. "We shall hear more presently. In the meantime, who is that?" and he pointed to Henry.

"Master Henry Langdale, my only son," replied the knight.

"He seems to have hurt his hand," said the other, gazing fixedly at the youth.

"Yes," replied the knight, dryly, "boys will seek dangerous sports."

"True," said the officer, and then turning towards the young man who had borne letters on the second of the month to Childs Wickham, he asked: "And that lad —who is he?"

"The son of one of my tenants," answered Sir Edward; "stand forward, Richard. This gentleman may soon convince himself."

"Neither the same height nor the same complexion," observed the officer, comparing the youth's features with a written paper he drew from his pocket. "He does not seem to have been in any dangerous sports."

"None that I know of," replied Sir Edward; "the person who misinformed you must have done so in hope of some reward. But I give you my word of honor, as a gentleman and a knight, that King Charles, if you are seeking him, is not here, and never has been."

"Perhaps so," replied the officer, bowing his head; "but we must do our duty. The house must be fully searched; and in the meantime, I must hold all here present, but my own men, prisoners of war, till the Lord General's arrival. I fear we have been led astray. Woe be to those who did it!"

He was a prompt, quick man, and Sir Edward doubted not a good soldier. A separate room near the hall was

assigned to the master of the house, and his son and one or two others were placed in chambers near. The chambers were examined well, the doors locked and bolted, a sentry placed before each, and the rest of the men were shut up in a large dining hall apart, and, while the officer and his soldiers proceeded to a stricter search of the house, were left to meditate upon the sudden reversal of all their hopes of an escape on the morrow.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT a wonderful and blessed thing is night, when nature withdraws the stimulus poured upon the brain through the little channel of the eye, and all the cares and fatigues of the past day, like sour nurses, who have been cross with the wayward child till it was weary, turn kind and compassionate at last, and rock the mind to sleep. "The blanket of the dark," Shakspeare calls it, and contrasts it with Heaven. Now, doubtless there is many a wicked thing done behind the blanket; but I see not why the misuse of any of Heaven's best gifts by man and man's passions, should take away from the value of that gift. The best boon that ever was conveyed can be abused; and we have no one to thank for the evil but ourselves. When God created the evil and the good, He permitted the evil, but ordained the good, and left man

to choose between them.—Shall we blame God for what He permitted? Shall we repine that He left us free agents?—Shall we justify ourselves by thinking that He did not bind us while He created us, but left us to choose for ourselves? Let us rather deplore the weakness which we have engendered and encouraged in our own hearts, repent of each evil that has brought others in its train, and thank Him, who has given us blessings we deserved not, freedom which we have ourselves abused, a thousand guides into the right path to whose voice we would not listen, and yet has called us home at the last, if we will but obey the voice of Him who sent us forth.

Little children, listen unto me, and let not all the mercies of the Lord be given in vain.

The man who invented lamps, I think, did more harm than good; he extended the time of strife and turmoil; he abridged the period of repose and peace; he gave to active thought and mental labor more than their fair share of life; he crowded existence with act; he deprived exertion of repose. Some men, indeed, can cast from them in a moment the memory of strife and trouble, and find at once the balm provided by God for the daily bruises of the conflict. I know a minister who is so happily constituted, that after the most fiery debate, the most eager struggle, he can lie down and sleep as calmly as a child; and such a man was Sir Edward Langdale. The soldiers, when they locked the door, left him a light; but in a few moments he blew it out, and, stretched upon the bed, went sound asleep. He had, it is true, a wife, a son, a daughter, all prisoners in that house; but he had prayed God for them, and in Him he trusted. The darkness

relieved the overwrought brain, fatigue and watching gave down to the pillow, and slumber visited him unasked.

It was past ten, and well nigh eleven, when the good knight lay down; and in the house there was many a sound for more than an hour after. Every room, every closet, I might say every cranny, which had not been searched before, was strictly visited; and the stables and the chambers over them were examined. The horses were counted, too; but they were fewer than the inmates of the house; and unless some one had already departed, it was evident that the Parliamentary party had possession of all who had lately arrived; for all the beasts bore evidence of toil and travel, and some were slightly wounded. An old man and woman, too, who had been found in the kitchen, were cross-questioned rigorously; but they merely stated that they had been on the premises for years. They had remained from the time Sir Edward and his lady had left, some years before, had been ejected by sequestrators, restored when the sequestration was taken off, and had seen no one enter the place since but Sir Edward, who had come on the fourth of September with his son, whom they remembered as a boy, and a few followers, and Lady Langdale and her daughter, who had come afterwards with some attendants. The whole party they described and counted, and on comparing, the numbers showed that the account tallied exactly with that of the prisoners within. All this did not take place without a good deal of noise; for the soldiers did not moderate their tones out of reverence for the repose of the sleepers, and sometimes a tongue was heard shouting from the bottom to the top of the house, when any fancied discovery was made. The leader him-

self retired to the dining-hall, and the cellar having been opened by a key which fitted all locks, proceeded to console the inner man with the best he could find. Food was not very abundant, indeed, but the wine was good, and to him it seemed to supply very satisfactorily the paucity of more solid meat. It made him not merry in the least, however. He remained grave and gloomy, muttering to himself more than once,

"We have been cheated, that is clear. The Lord General will be in a fine humor!"

But all the noise in the house did not waken Sir Edward Langdale, who had been accustomed to sleep in more troublous scenes than that. Indeed, the ending of anxiety and excitement, the termination, as it seemed to him, of exertion and expectation, probably tended to render his slumber more profound. He knew the house too well to imagine escape possible from the room in which he was confined; he knew the man in whose hands he was too well to think they would show mercy to a royalist taken in arms. The officer, however, waked and kept watch, while his prisoner slept so quietly, and his mind, at least, was evidently not at ease.

The sounds within the building were not the only ones which broke the silence of that night. Towards two o'clock, the galloping of horse coming along the road was heard, then the challenge of a sentry placed upon the terraced garden which separated the house from the highway, and then several voices speaking below. At the foot of the great staircase some one seemed to stop and talk for a minute or two with the soldier there on guard. There could be heard a deep, slow voice putting questions, and the short but apparently respectful answers of

an inferior. At length several steps began to move up the staircase, and the officer rose, composed his countenance, and gazed towards the door. At length—for the new comers did not hurry themselves—the door opened, and a small party entered. The first was a man of middle height—rather above than below it—powerful and muscular in frame, but not at all obese. He wore a simple grey coat, with a plain linen collar, and a tall, unornamented black hat. His face, as far as features and coloring went, was decidedly coarse and plain, the features generally large and heavy, and the nose especially thick and ill-shaped; but the brow was massy and powerful, and the brownish grey eye, though it had no fire, had a world of stern, grave power in it, and seemed to menace and rule all it fell upon. It was by far the finest feature in the face, and those who looked at and could bear it, forgot in a moment the heavy nose and somewhat animal mouth, the coarse, greasy complexion, and the thin, straggling hair, and felt as if they had before them one of the rulers of old Rome. The whole expression, indeed—and it spread through the entire figure—was that of command. A consciousness of power was in every line and in every movement; and yet, strange to say, during the scenes that followed, there was once or twice upon that face—for a moment, and only for a moment—a look of keen cunning, ay, and at times a look of soft weakness. Such was the person who entered a step or two before the rest. Behind him were two Parliamentary officers, evidently of inferior rank. Then came a soldier or two, with a gentleman seemingly wounded, but who bore, in a cord passed over his arms, the evidence of being a prisoner. In their hands, too, but not

tied, was the abject-looking form of the young Jabez Brown, whose low, terrified and crouching demeanor offered a strange contrast to the firm step and upright carriage of the wounded man before him, who, notwithstanding his bonds, entered with a fearless look, which quailed not for a moment, though it had no rashness or bravado about it.

Without a word, the first man who entered walked straight across the room and seated himself in the chair at the end of the table without taking off his hat. He sat for a moment or two in calm silence, and then turning his head slightly towards the officer who continued standing by his side, he said,

"Verily, Captain Lampton, we have had a long and a quick ride to-night, but we heard some good news of thee at the foot of the staircase. Thou hast taken this nest of malignants and all that it contains, but is the news all good? Truly we must smite and spare not. Having put our hand to the plough, we must not turn back—"

He paused, but kept gazing at the other with a look which was difficult to translate, but such was the power of that rude countenance that Lampton, who would probably have fronted a whole squadron of pikes without quailing, stood stammering and hesitating unable to answer.

"Tut, man!" said Cromwell, at length, with a clearer brow than the other expected, "Never stand humming. It is an exceeding good thing, Captain Lampton, and a point of wisdom when we have matters of great moment to consider, which may involve mighty consequences, not to be too prompt of reply, and to let that reply be some-

what doubtful or in other words evasive, in order that we may have full time, yea, even while we are speaking, to consider and resolve what the final and decisive answer should be. The present is a mere matter of yea and nay. But we have heard all below, and know what thou wouldst say if thou didst but say anything. Thou hast not succeeded fully, and we have been led astray by the tidings of yonder ill-looking knave. For that reason we have brought him up here, for with the first light to-morrow, we will examine all the prisoners, and if we find that he has had some reasonable cause for his mistake—that he has shown himself merely an officious fool rather than a wily trickster, he shall have the reward of fools. If not, he shall hang. At present I will take some repose; but mind that wounded man be guarded well. He was found hiding in a hovel, and we have reason to think he is more than he seems."

As he spoke, Cromwell advanced slowly towards the door of the room, where Sir Edward Langdale was confined, and had his hand already extended towards the ornamented lock which distinguished it as the principal guests' chamber, when Captain Lampton interposed respectfully, saying,

"The master of the house is shut up there, Lord General."

"Ay, and what is he called in his generation, Lampton?"

"Sir Edward Langdale, I am told," replied the officer.

"Ha! Thou knowest him not," answered Cromwell; "and yet thou hast cause, for he pummeled thy troop at Edge-hill till they knew not if there were ribs left

among them. But I know him. We have met likewise. Open the door, good Lampton."

The officer obeyed, and the light streamed in, causing but a momentary movement in Sir Edward Langdale, as he lay where he had cast himself down in his clothes.

Cromwell took two strides into the room, and stood gazing at the sleeping man for several minutes. Then bending down his head he took a closer look, and raised himself again and sighed.

"It is the same," he said, "it is the same. I can trace it there in the broad, clear brow, in the calm, resolved lip. Two and twenty years lie upon him as lightly as snow flakes. They have been heavier upon me."

Captain Lampton heard all, but comprehended nothing. He had never seen that stern man look so gently upon any one but his daughter, and he was much surprised. But Cromwell came forth and closed the door, merely saying,

"Show me another room, and let me be roused in three hours. I must be fifty miles hence by two to-morrow."

CHAPTER III.

It was still night—dark night, and no light burned in the room where Sir Edward Langdale was confined, when the prisoner, who had slumbered long and profoundly, was awakened by some noise in the chamber. It was not loud; but one of those slight sounds which rouse a light sleeper more readily than a louder and long continued noise.

Sir Edward listened, and thought he heard some one move, as if uneasily on a chair; and he demanded aloud,

"Who is there?"

No one answered; but a step approached his bedside, and a hot, feverish hand grasped his.

"Hush!" said a voice he well knew, "speak low! It is I, Bernard March. They have thrust me in here, because all the other rooms are full. You were sleeping soundly; and, sleep, I fancy, is the best thing for you or me. We shall sleep soundly enough, ere long. Where is Lucy; where is Lady Langdale? Are they safe?"

"All prisoners, Bernard," said the knight, pressing his hand. "But we feared that you were killed. It will gladden poor Lucy's heart, amidst her sorrows, to find you still living. We saw you fall."

"Better for her and me, that I had died there," replied the Earl, "then, one grief would have ended all; but now, what has she to go through? For me, the coming fate is light. One blow of an axe, and all is

over. But for her, poor girl, there is not even that relief. Would that I had never seen her. Oh that we had never met, rather than that I should have brought all this misery upon her."

He was evidently much moved; but Sir Edward answered,

"Fie, fie, Bernard. There be some griefs more wholesome, ay, and more dear than long hours of joy. Lucy may mourn—we must all of us mourn in this life; but the memories you leave behind, and the hopes of the future, will pour balm into her heart; and, please God, will enable her to endure. Besides," he added, "while there is life, they say, there is hope. But bad as these men are, they will not hurt women; and their greed of blood, God knows, has but too large means just now of glutting itself."

"For me, the hope is very small," replied the young nobleman; "as yet, they know not who I am—but the moment that is discovered, my fate is sealed. As to escape, that is a vain expectation. I have a ball in my shoulder, which takes away all the activity I once possessed. I and my horse were struck together. Thank Heaven, he will never be mounted by a traitor! He served his master and his King till his last hour, and died, as I should have died, upon the battle-field.

Several minutes of silence ensued; and then, the Earl asked abruptly,

"How is Henry? Poor lad, he seemed badly hurt.

"Not so, Bernard," replied Sir Edward, rising and feeling his way towards the window, "the ball passed through his hand, and disabled it for a time; but he is

young, when wounds either of the body or the heart ought soon to heal. His seems getting well already."

Thus saying he took down the shutter from the window and looked out. It was still night; but there seemed a slight diminution of the darkness, not exactly dawn, but that something less than twilight which precedes the harbinger of day.

"It will soon be light," said the knight; "thank God for it, for the most painful part of imprisonment is the blank, rayless night."

"It is like our fate, Sir Edward," answered Bernard March, "all obscure and helpless. What do you intend to do when daylight comes? What is the height of that window? Could you not escape even now under cover of the night?"

Sir Edward smiled, for the Earl's words showed the first return of hope; but he answered,

"The window is far too high; and even were it not so, I should not try. What, leave my dear wife and children, and you too in captivity? No, no, Bernard, I must wait and see. We shall soon know more. I hear them even now stirring in the neighboring room."

"Then we shall soon hear more," said the Earl, "these people are not long in deliberation usually; see, it is growing grey in the east."

It was so truly. Dawn had commenced, and Bernard March and Lucy's father stood at the window and watched the changes, from bluish grey to russet brown, and from brown to golden yellow.

The rise of the sun is always a beautiful thing, and I who have witnessed it more frequently perhaps than many men, can still appreciate that loveliness which never

palls and brings always something fresh. But when we see the morning break, with doubt and uncertainty in our own hearts, as well as in dread or sorrow, there is something even in the beauty which is melancholy, in the bright coloring which is gloomy.

"Open the window, Sir Edward," said Bernard March, "I have been so feverish all night, that I feel as if I should be suffocated. A little fresh morning air will do me good."

"If we could but have a surgeon to extract the ball!" said the knight; but at the same time he opened the window with all that noise and rattle which old casements, and many new ones, produce under the process.

A soldier was instantly in the room; and seeing Sir Edward and his fellow prisoner at the window, he asked with a lowering brow,

"What are you about?—trying to escape?"

"Trying to escape from suffocation in this hot room!" answered the Earl, calmly. "Look down there, my man, and tell us for what you would take that leap."

But while the man looked out, with a grim smile at the idea, Sir Edward added,

"Is it not possible to obtain a surgeon? This gentleman seems badly hurt."

"He is like to need a surgeon for his soul more than for his body," growled the man, and left the room; but as he closed the door, they heard him say to those without, "they are asking for a surgeon."

The reply was unheard; but a number of voices, and a great deal of talking met the ear, over all of which, one deep, sonorous voice was from time to time predominant. There were various sounds below the window,

too; and soldiers were seen gathering, and horses led out, several men bringing buckets of water, or leading down chargers towards the neighboring stream to let the poor beasts drink.

At length, after the lapse of about half-an-hour, a sound of wailing and remonstrance was heard; but some soldiers pushed a young, ill-looking man out upon the green; his coat was stripped off; his hands tied behind his back; and some dozen of well-laid-on and tingling blows were inflicted on his shoulders with doubled stirrup leathers. He was then untied, suffered to pick up his coat, and driven through the gates in no very ceremonious manner.

All this time the same deep voice went on, in powerful but monotonous tones; and at first the Earl and Sir Edward thought the speaker was preaching, but then came, apparently, a quick, short question, and then an answer in another voice.

For more than half-an-hour the same course of things proceeded; now conversations, rapid and loud enough; now the tones of some one holding forth; now some little incident upon the green before the house—sufficient to call the momentary attention of the prisoners, but not to detain it long. At length the door of the chamber opened, and the same man who had appeared before put in his head, saying,

"One called for a surgeon. Let him come forth. A surgeon is here."

Lord Dartmoor turned from the window to follow the soldier, but as he passed Sir Edward Langdale, he silently clasped his hand, with a warm, lingering pressure, which seemed to say,

"It may be the last."

When he entered the great dining hall adjoining, he found it much more thinly tenanted than he expected. There was sitting at the end of the large table that stern, hard featured soldier who had arrived in the middle of the night. He wore his hat, and was making some notes on a long strip of paper, while before him stood, bare headed, but not tied, young Henry Langdale, with his right hand and arm supported by a hastily made sling. Standing a little further down the hall, wrapped in a horseman's long, loose coat, was no other than the monk whom the Earl had found at the house of his good cousin, Lady Janet; but the sight of him caused no surprise, as Bernard at that moment imagined he had been taken with the rest of the party. At each door were two musketeers.

Taking advantage of the single moment, when Cromwell's head was bent over the paper on which he was writing, Lord Dartmoor made a sign to Henry not to recognize him, and passed close by his side without a word or a second glance.

Cromwell looked up, ran his eye over the form of the Cavalier from head to foot; and then turned to Henry again, resuming an examination which seemed to have commenced before.

"Verily, thou art bold, boy," he said, "to own that thou wert at Worcester and did'st thy best—it was but little, I wot—to frustrate God's crowning mercy to this poor army of England."

"What was the use of denying it, sir?" said Henry Langdale.

"That is true too," answered Cromwell. "I see thou tellest

the truth, and that is something in these days, when the father of lies is busy about the land—specially in the camp and resort of the Cavaliers."

Henry bit his lip and colored a good deal; but Cromwell went on saying,

"Yet, thou art a mere boy, and hast not beard enough to dull the edge of the axe. Where wert thou born?"

"In France," answered the lad; and then with a more rapid combination of ideas and a just appreciation of the circumstances than might have been expected, he added, "many years ago my father aided the poor Protestants of Rochelle, and settled in France. There was I born."

"Ha!" said the General. "Ha! and who is or was thy father?"

Henry Langdale's cheek turned pale; but he felt that to attempt concealment was vain, and he answered boldly, and with a look of pride,

"Sir Edward Langdale, of Buckley, a true Christian, and a good soldier."

Cromwell for a minute or two uttered not a word; but sat and gazed at the youth in silence, without a shade crossing his countenance which could afford any indication of the affection of his mind. At length he said,

"Where is thy father?"

"Nay, I know not," replied Henry; "he was here last night, and fell into the hands of your men."

"He is in there, my Lord General," said the man who stood by; and Cromwell instantly turned his face towards the Earl.

"And who art thou?" asked the great usurper, seemingly taking no note of what the soldier had said.

"Thy face comes upon me as something I have seen in a dream. Nay, answer not. Let me try if I can unravel the tangled skein that events weave with events through a long and troublesome life till, at first sight, all seems knots and intricacies. We employ labor and skill to untwist the threads—often in vain—but then we grow impatient and we cut them. Did I ever see thee before?"

"I cannot tell," said Lord Dartmoor, "but if so, not near enough to know me. Had we been so near, it were unlikely that you and I had met here to-day."

"Even so!" said Cromwell, "thou art, then, one of those rash and heedless men who carry private passion into public contests, who see in the open adversary, the individual foe, and become assassins rather than soldiers."

"Not so," exclaimed Lord Dartmoor, interrupting him, "so heaven help me, as I looked upon you—as I look upon you now, but as the public enemy, and would have slain you as a duty, long ere this, had heaven given me the opportunity of doing so, openly, man to man. But had we met, where I had you at disadvantage, though your death had saved the Kingdom, I would have spared you."

"Even as David spared Saul in the cave of Engedi," said Cromwell, with somewhat of a sneer in his tone; "but I am in David's place now, and thou in Saul's. The case being somewhat reversed, maketh a great difference, young man." It is for me to spare or not, as God gives me judgment. What is thy name? Answer quickly."

"My name is Bernard March, Earl of Dartmoor," answered the young nobleman at once. "I am not ashamed of that name, nor afraid to own it, even in these bonds."

"The Earl of Dartmoor!" cried Cromwell, half starting up and then reseating himself. "So young! so fair! and yet so terrible a disturber of the peace of England. Where are thy wounds, thy scars, the marks of thy many battles? Where Newbury, Edge-hill, and Marston Moor. Thine, like mine, has been a life of battles, but I am worn and weary with the strife—thou art a boy. Where are the marks of all thou hast done, I say?"

He elevated his voice, as he asked the last question, and spoke with vehement rapidity.

"Here!" said the Earl, laying his hand upon his heart, and then, in a calmer voice, he added, "General Cromwell, it is vain for us to bandy words. Did great success afford any true indication of God's approval, you are right, and I am wrong; yet of one thing be sure, that if you have acted conscientiously, and believed that all you did was for His good service who made us both, and that the little power he grants to mortal men was employed to do his will, believe at least this, that such was also the case with me, and that, with the lights which I possess, were the same to come over again, and with the same results, I would act as I have done."

"Well spoken!" answered Cromwell, with an inclination of his head, "and perchance true. Yet thou must die, young man. For the peace of this Commonwealth, thou must die."

"So be it!" said the Earl.

"Yet I would not," continued the Lord General, "that men should say, I took a wounded man and refused him a surgeon's aid. That man, there, who was brought in this morning, boasts of some leech's skill, and seems

to have treated yonder boy's hand with discretion. He will attend to thy wounds. Look to him, sirrah, and give him what relief you can.

"Let that young man go," he continued, speaking to the soldier near: "he is but a boy, and has committed a boy's error. They say his mother and sister are here. Let them go, too, whither they will. He can go with them. We do not make war on women and boys."

The soldier, who seemed much in his confidence, spoke a word in his ear. "True!" he said, "mighty true. It is a point of policy, when we find a pile of vipers's eggs on a dunghill to crush the reptiles in the egg—if the mixen be not too large; but if it be, we waste our time, good Everard. England is large, man; and, if we went over it all, trampling on the young of the snake, we should never have done. Besides, we should take upon us what Heaven reserves for itself. Some may prove harmless, some be eaten up by the fowls of the air, some be crushed by the feet of passers by, few grow to maturity. Let them go, I say; but first take this youth's word that he never bears arms against the Commonwealth of England again. You may take his word. No need to swear him. These men keep their words—'tis a virtue, though a solitary one. No words! begone."

Cromwell bent his head over the table, and for some minutes seemed lost in thought. He saw, indeed, much that was passing before him. He beheld the Earl of Dartmoor seat himself calmly in a chair and bare his shoulder, while the monk, with somewhat rude instruments of surgery, proceeded to the painful operation of extracting the ball from the shoulder, sometimes bending over him and speaking a word or two in his ear, some-

times devoting himself entirely to his task. The General marked not with any great attention, but he did see and notice that the young nobleman sat unheld and firm, while the other probed the wound and searched for the ball, and then drew forth the bullet with what seemed a painful wrench. He marked, too, that there was no resistance, no motion of the limbs, though a slight shudder of the flesh of the arm showed that the patient suffered.

"A dangerous man!" thought Cromwell, "but a brave!" Then, turning to the soldier, he said, "Bring forth the other prisoner. He is the last, I think. Stay. Order my horse, and tell the officer commanding, that we march in an hour. Verily the poor beasts must eat, ay, and the men, too, must partake of those creature comforts which have been vouchsafed to restore our strength after the heavy labor which is sometimes needful to obtain His blessings who willed at the first that we should eat bread by the sweat of our brow. We ourselves, though no sickly girl, to fear some small fatigue, are not so lithe and enduring of limb as we were in days of yore—but, talking of girls, see that the young man whom we have just dismissed, have his horse restored; likewise the women's horses, and let them ride forth with all the other men—those who have passed before us, I would say—the common men. Make no mistake. The youth, and the women, and serving folk. Let them to horse quickly and begone, and take their way towards St. Neots, with good safe-conducts. They can rest there, for a day, and then pass the sea. We remember that St. Neots well. They brew not good beer there, but they drink it, brewed elsewhere. Thou understandest. Begone; let there be no mistakes.

CHAPTER IV.

To those who are not well accustomed to the manner of speech usual with the great-usurper, the directions given on the present occasion, might have seemed somewhat confused; but the man who stood by his side had served him long, and though armed as a soldier, and to say sooth, no bad fighting man in the battle field, had been originally what was then called "the body servant" of the great general. Long accustomed to divine his master's meaning amidst his cloud of words, he needed not to wait for the brief short sentence, which, like a flash of lightning from a cloud, usually in the end gave light to all that was obscure before in Cromwell's speeches; and in truth, he very often fathomed his disposition and intentions before the dark and abstract sayings, in which things were usually at first involved, were half concluded. He only paused one moment then, not clearly comprehending one of the orders he had received, whether to bring forth Sir Edward Langdale or not; but then he advanced to the door of the room where the knight was confined, unlocked it and threw it open, saying: "You can come forth."

With a slow step, Sir Edward entered the lower hall —his own family hall; but the sight of the guards at each door, showed him that he was still a prisoner. He saw too, Bernard March, his well loved friend, still under the surgeon's hand, and he saw the great but ruthless victor,

the subverter of all the institutions he had been taught to venerate, the destroyer of his friends, the murderer, as he thought, of his King, seated in the chair where he had so often sat, ready to deal the word of life or death to all around him. But Edward Langdale was still the same who in former years had encountered Richelieu, more accessible but not less scrupulous, and as powerful, and his confidence and his presence of mind, did not leave him.

With a calm, slow step, he advanced direct towards the end of the table, and seated himself on a chair directly opposite to Cromwell, who, for his part, remained gazing down upon the strip of paper before him, and scrawling upon it some characters in a large straggling hand.

Neither spoke for several minutes, and before he addressed the prisoner, Cromwell muttered to himself "No, it cannot be! God does not require too much." Then raising his eyes, he asked, "Who art thou?"

"The owner of this house," replied the knight," "my name is Edward Langdale."

"A bitter malignant said Cromwell," art thou not the son of that Sir Richard Langdale, a brave man but a great fool, who died in one of those ungodly quarrels with a neighbour in which you and yours delight.

"I am the son—the second son—of that gentleman of whom you speak," replied the other, weighing each word.

"Was he not a prelatist and a persecutor of those who humbly opined they could serve God according to their own lights, without aid from a farthing candle of the bishops?" asked the General, who was apparently waxing warm in his own peculiar tenets.

But the answer of the prisoner cooled him "I am not responsible for my father's conduct," he said, and in truth, know little of it; for I was young when he died. But I know enough to say no! to your question, sir. This I do know, he was a friend of the good Prince of Soubise, the defender of the protestant faith in France, and a zealous advocate of liberty of conscience in all men.

"That is well," answered Cromwell, "but speak of thyself. Wast thou not the pupil of that Doctor Winthorne who was a rector somewhere near, some twenty five years ago—a horse-riding, fowling, hunting parson of the old times, before new lights had broken upon this then benighted land?"

Sir Edward's cheek turned somewhat red, but he answered calmly: "I was a pupil of that excellent Dr. Winthorne who never fowled or hunted, and who refused the Bishopric of Ely because he thought he could do good where he was, and he did it. But General Cromwell, it is in vain to turn back to my young days; I am here your prisoner, and avow myself one of that party who have held fast their loyalty and the faith they received from their ancestors. I have been your adversary, I have shed my blood against you; but I defy you or any other man to say, I have ever abused a moment of success, or that I have ever persecuted or abused an opponent who fell into my power. You will act what part you will towards me. I have acted mine well towards you and yours."

"I have heard so much of you," answered Cromwell gravely, "but my questions are not so vain as you think, Sir. Good services to God and God's cause, may sometimes

have caused errors, by showing, you will understand, that those errors were faults of the understanding, not of the spirit or the will. Are you that Edward Langdale who, when a mere youth, went to screen and comfort the poor people of Rochelle and succeeded in delivering some of them."

"I am, I suppose, the person you speak of," replied the knight," I went to Rochelle in the time of the siege and did what I could."

"Strange!" said the general, "that thou shouldst now be the oppressor of men's consciences in this poor land. Have we ever met before?"

"Many a time," said Sir Edward Langdale, "but never so near as now—never so near that I could see your face or you mine."

"You are mistaken," said Cromwell, evidently moved by some strong and strange emotion—"you are much mistaken. I have seen your face before and you mine, though both are changed. Can I look from that window and see yonder trees and leaves, that river flowing calmly on, and yet forget? Can I behold that moving sky and those bright floating clouds, and feel the soft breathing of my native air, and not remember? Oh that the days of joy would return and blot out all the other memories between the now and the then. Yet you who have fewer years and fewer events to recollect, can forget. Do you not remember the stream which ran gently by Applethorpe, like a good man's life, and the old trees and the glades through which it passed, and the speckled trout and the early morning's stroll? Edward Langdale, Edward Langdale, you have saved my life, and I cannot doom you to death—no, not for the Commonwealth of England. The memories of the

sweetest years of all my life step in and hold my hand. True, my heart was not regenerate then, but it was young and soft, and many a time, at moments far apart, I have thought of the day and the plunge in the gurgling water and your helping hand, and I have felt a strange sort of remorse in my own conscience that I did not even thank you for the life you had saved at the peril of your own, but went away and left you to think that I had no gratitude. Do you remember now?"

"Oh yes, right well," answered the knight, "but you are much changed, Sir, and I cannot recall your features."

"Changed!" exclaimed Cromwell, "have I not had enough to change me? Have I not seen sorrow and strife, and felt things that burn the heart to tinder and scorch the very brain? But those days I never forget, for the only thing which could blot them out would be days as sweet, and they will never come."

"Alas, Sir," answered Sir Edward, "the only thing which can ever give back the feelings of youth to our latter years, is the doing of good and kindly deeds. We must make our heart like a youth's if we would feel a youth's freshness."

"Freshness, man!" cried Cromwell, "where shall I find freshness." The lot has fallen to me in stony places, and though I stand upon a mountain top, I was happier at the foot of the hill. The ground around me is all barren. This is the only day, for many a year, when the scent of other times has come back in all its freshness to my nostrils. You have fought against me, you have thwarted me in many a thing—nay, I well nigh think, you have fought against God. But you shall not die. You shall go free.

Your children and your wife are free already, gone to St. Neots, and there you may also join them."

The last words were spoken just as the soldier whom he had sent below re-entered the room, and with that familiarity of remonstrance which Cromwell is known to have tolerated, the man exclaimed, "Nay, verily, my Lord General, this man is an old and perverse malignant. He has sinned against Israel, and led many more to sin. Let him die the death! Cromwell's manner changed instantly. "What," he exclaimed sternly," is it because the Lord has given the crowning mercy of Worcester field, that such as thou shouldst think they have deeper thoughts than the chosen servants. What says the book? Of a truth, it speaketh to thee, Oldborough, and all like thee. Does it not say: "Why do you harden your hearts, as Egypt and Pharao hardened their hearts? Did not he, after he was struck, let them go, and they departed; and thou, too, shalt go, Edward Langdale, and shalt depart out of this land, because thou didst peril thy life to comfort our poor brethren of Rochelle; and hast done many an act well pleasing to the Lord and for this service; wert thou tenfold a malignant, thou shalt go; but thou shalt give the parole of thine honor that thou wilt not raise thy hand against this Commonwealth again. Leave me, Oldborough. Thou hast been indiscreet; but thou art an old and faithful servant of the Lord and of his poor creature."

"I meant not to offend," said the man somewhat sullenly, and left the room.

"See you here, now," said Cromwell, in a freer tone, "how many there be to say, slay, when I say, spare; and yet perchance, men will hereafter call me a man of blood, when

it is a hard thing for me to resist the voice of all those who, under the will of God, have raised me to the supreme command of this poor army. But hearken to me Edward Langdale. Hasten to St. Neots, and join your wife and children. Take ship at Lynn, and cross the seas as soon as may be. You have no ties here now."

"Your pardon, Lord General," replied the knight, "I have as dear as wife or child."

"Your brother?" said Cromwell, "I forgot until but now, you were the second son. Were is he? He has taken no part in these strifes. I have never heard his name mixed up therewith.

Where is he?" A voice from the other side of the room said, "Here!" and the monk walked calmly forward and held out his arms to Sir Edward Langdale. "Let me hold you for ever to my heart, Edward," he said. "I have come here to do you justice, for through long, long years, I did you wrong. I have wept and repented, but not enough. I come to give you back your own. I come to ask your forgiveness before I die."

Edward gladly took him in his arms, saying, "Welcome, welcome Richard. This is indeed a blessed change;" and the two strong men wept.

CHAPTER IV.

"HOLD," cried Cromwell, after having afforded a brief opportunity for the expression of feelings which he saw were strong and natural, though he did not clearly understand the sorrows whence they came." Hold, we have no time to waste on foolery or on soft things that link not themselves with public duties. Edward Langdale, who is this man?"

"My dear brother," answered the knight; "Sir Richard Langdale."

"No," cried the monk vehemently, "I am not Sir Richard Langdale"—I never was. In two or three sentences all is easily explained. My mother was never his father's lawful wife. Mark me for one moment, Lord General," and as he spoke he walked slowly but calmly up to Cromwell's side, and leaned upon the table close to him." At my father's death, he, this Edward, was a young boy, I a poor man. Ambition seized upon me; I added to some papers, fabricated others, and claimed and obtained an inheritance which was not mine. He maintained his own rights, thwarted me as regards this estate of Buckley, and won the hate of him who was at heart inclined to love him. Thou knowest what it is to feel humbled and debased in the presence of one to whom we are doing wrong."

Cromwell started and turned sharply round; but the other went on without observing the emotion his words

had produced. "We met once after we had not seen each other for years. He gave me hard words, and I stabbed him—him, unresisting, and with his bosom open to my sword. I thought I had killed him and had added the crime of Cain to the evil passions of Cain. I have passed my life in penitence ever since, and finding not long ago that God had spared me the crime which I had thought committed, I have come over here to relinquish to him the inheritance I had usurped, and to make all those declarations and admissions which will establish his rights and may atone for my offences. This is all I have to say, Sir General; but now thou canst understand clearly who I am, and why I am here."

"Not altogether," answered Cromwell; "but this is no time to examine these things scrupulously. We must not waste the few moments granted us for important action in this life. There is no charge against thee: thou art free to come and go. Thy brother is free also; but he is an exile from this land. Yet, as an excess of favor for deeds he has done in other days, which truly have a sweet savour before the Lord and his poor servants, we will allow him in his safe conduct to come and go, to settle all his affairs with thee and others, and to transport himself beyond the four seas. But what means he when he says, he leaves those behind him who are as dear to him as his wife, who is free, or his children, who are free? You, he cannot mean, for he knew not, it seems, that you were in the land."

"He means that young man," said the monk, pointing to Lord Dartmoor," one worthy of all his love, which I have never been. He linked himself to him by love and kindly actions; I severed myself from him by enmity and

wrong. As in heaven so on earth, verily we both have our reward. Shall God be merciful and man be obdurate? Shall thy heart be as hard as the nether millstone, while his is as soft as the honey of the mountain? Is there not enough wailing in this land already, but thou must add another cry of sorrow to the voice of complaint that is rising up against thee?"

Cromwell sat and listened, looking down heavily as if he hardly heard the words addressed to him; but at length, as the monk paused, he answered sternly," Who gave thee licence to hold forth? Thou standest thyself in peril, and shall thy voice prevail for others? Man, man, if my eyes he not blinded and my ears stopped, thou art of the herd of Belial, one of the worshippers of the beast, perchance a priest of the false prophet. And shalt thou school the Elect? shalt thou pretend to reveal the secrets of the highest to his saints and his chosen servants—those who have been hired, it may be at the first hour, it may be at the eleventh; but who have toiled in his vineyard till their garments are red with the juice of the wine-press, and who have had an earnest of their wages with battles of shakings and bellyfuls of dry blows. Shall we spare when the Lord says, strike, or shall we take our hand from the plough when the first furrow is hardly turned, or doest thou think to deceive me? Are not all thy crew skilful in arts which save the body and condemn the soul—by witch-craft and charming and what not; and now that thou hast dressed this youth's arm, and given, it would seem, temporal—that is to say, corporeal ease—thou wouldst have him given over to thee and thine to make him ten times more a child of hell than thyself.

Well, I wot thou art mistaken. We will deal otherwise with him. As for thyself, thou mayest go, for we have said it. As for the lad, he must die, for have we not said that too? His offences are budded and full blown — verily, the fruit, such as it is, is mature, verily too ripe, and ready to drop from the bough; but death is, in one sense, like the blossom of the hop, somewhat bitter perchance, but often salutary amidst the sweet compounds of this world. Young man, thou hast to die."

"When?" demanded the Earl of Dartmoor without moving a muscle, and before Sir Edward Langdale could interpose.

"That must rest with those into whose hands I shall give thee," replied Cromwell darkly. "They are not slothful in this work, I trow—Edward Langdale, urge me not! If thou holdest the life I have given thee as a boon, be silent."

"Take it, when thou wilt, General Cromwell," replied Sir Edward. He and I can die together as we have fought together, and lived so long together. I will not accept my life at the expense of my daughter's promised husband."

"It is not at my expense, noble friend," replied the Earl. "I have fought against this man and his cause from my very boyhood. I do not say that I deserve death from him or any man, for I have done but what I thought my duty, and have never refused mercy to any one who asked it; but if I have deserved death from any one, it has been from him."

"Ha! sayest thou?" said Cromwell gravely, without in the least relaxing his stern look.

"There is but one favor, Lord General, that I will

ask," continued the Earl, "and that is to be promised one interview, before I die, with my friend's daughter, my affianced wife. I ask it not for my own sake, but for hers. I am ready to die this instant, but I know that in years to come, it will be a comfort to her to think, that she saw me before I died."

"'Tis well," said Cromwell, "'tis easy. I said not that thou shouldst die at once. The young woman was in the house but now. She may be so still. At all events, thou shalt have full time to bid her farewell."

"That in itself is a mercy; and I thank you, sir," replied the Earl.

Cromwell bowed his head; but he was in no degree moved. Men, it seems to me, have much mistaken the character of that great and, perhaps, inscrutable man. Though certainly not inaccessible to human feeling, it seems to me, that he almost always acted upon profound conviction. He might be moved, he might be touched by those terrible positions in which his enemies were often placed; but he never suffered the feelings of the heart, in which he was not wanting, to interfere with design formed upon far wider views. Cromwell was deeply affected, we are told, by the interview between Charles I. and his children, but it disturbed not his purposes, it shook not his resolution in the least. He marched on to the great catastrophe as firmly as if there had not been a pebble in his path. As far as I have read, and been able to understand his history—a task more difficult than ordinary readers believe,—the two parts in that extraordinary man's nature were separated by a barrier, almost impossible to be passed. The kindly sympathies of which he was by no means destitute; and the

steadfast purpose which carried all his actions to their conclusion, were things separate and apart in his nature, and to the latter all else was subservient. At times, indeed, a certain degree of softness would come over him: there are recorded instances of his being sportive and even mild, and it is probable, that at those moments, he was willing to spare and show generosity and even kindness—else how is it that we find individual instances of levity at moments of apparently very indiscriminate vengeance?—And in those instances we find that there was no great object to be obtained by sternness. There must be inconsistencies in all characters; but I am inclined to believe, that there were fewer in the character of Cromwell than is generally imagined.

After a short pause, during which the General seemed considering something deliberately, sitting with his eyes averted from the prisoner, but fixed upon the table, he wrote two or three words upon the scrap of paper before him, tore them off, and beckoning one of the soldiers from the door, gave them to the man with a brief command in a low voice. Then turning to Bernard March, he said, "Answer me one or two questions—if thou wilt. I say if thou wilt, advisedly; for undoubtedly this land has had enough of thee, and thy answer can make no change."

"I see not, General Cromwell, why I should reply at all," replied the Earl, with a slight smile, but without the least want of courtesy in his manner; "yet, as you have granted the only request I have to make, it were uncivil to refuse in return a few minutes of the few I probably have to live to answer your inquiries."

"Do not suppose," rejoined Cromwell, "that I purpose

to deal with thy case in so summary a manner. I say not that the power of life or death is not, as it were, in my hands; for I have but to order a court-martial on the green, and these poor men without, being greatly incensed, and ready to smite the Philistines hip and thigh—ay, marry, somewhat too ready—would, as is their bounden duty, of which truly they are well aware, find thee guilty, and execute thy sentence in the court yard, or elsewhere more convenient; and verily, no law would be broken, nor anything unseemly done, for this land is under the law called martial, which for the time—may its rigor soon be removed—supersedes all other laws; but there is no need just now of any such haste, for the will of the Lord has been done, and his crowning mercy vouchsafed at Worchester field. We have but to take care now that the land shall be no more troubled by our own weakness in sparing those whom he has delivered to our bow and spear; and, by him that made me —there shall be no such backsliding in me. Have I not gone forward to this very hour, without turning for a moment from the path set before me? What should I stay. It was for this I said thou must die, but I meant not that thou shouldst not have lawful and well considered trial; but to deal freely with thee, young man I judge that those who will judge thee are not likely—that is to say are very sure not—to let one malignant head stand where it is, unless I interpose either before or after, — which in thy case, verily, I will not do."

"All this is very likely," said the Earl, who had little taste for the Lord General's long and seemingly confused orations." But you mentioned some questions, Sir. Pray

remember that whether my time be long or short, I have enough to fill it somewhat sadly in my heart and brain."

"Truly thou hast, if thou employest the moments well," answered Cromwell. "As to the questions, I would ask if thou art not the brother of that Duke of — to whom we showed some favor in years gone, and though unwise in some things, showed himself faithful to his master unto the very last."

"I am the same," replied Lord Dartmoor, "a soldier from my boyhood, and brought up by that good brother in the same faithfulness to the same master."

"In that he was wrong," said Cromwell; "for verily he has led thee unto death. Thou art very young. Thou claimest also to be a peer; and though all such vanities have to be done away, nevertheless, certain regards, which it would be inconvenient to neglect, have made us tolerate things otherwise idle. Thou art a peer, I think."

"The Earl bowed his head, and Cromwell went on saying:" "Now answer; but not without consideration. In this we may show some favor. Wilt thou stand upon the privilege and be tried as a peer? or wilt thou go before those who judge the common soldiers?"

"What matters it?" said Lord Dartmoor, with an indifferent air. "I see not much to choose."

"The great men will have the block. The others will be shot!" said the great usurper briefly and sharply.

"Well then, I will choose the soldiers' death," replied the Earl. "I have faced so many bullets, I may as well face them now again."

The words were hardly spoken which sealed his fate, when the door on the right hand of Cromwell, as he sat in the hall, opened suddenly, and the form of Lucy

Langdale appeared. It would seem that no one had told her why she was brought there. Her face was very pale, but there was no other sign of fear about her; and her eye ran hastily over the various little groups, till at length it rested upon Bernard March. Then, in a moment, she sprang forward, and cast herself upon his bosom exclaiming.

Living! Living! Oh my love, oh my husband! and she burst into a passionate flood of tears."

"Cromwell did not behold the scene unmoved—perhaps he felt it more than pleased him—for, rising from his seat, he advanced to Lucy's side, and calmly putting her father's arm around her, he said, "Take her away, Edward Langdale, and comfort her."

"What, so soon!" cried Sir Edward and Bernard both together, and Lucy stretched forth her hands, with a look of mute despair.

"Thou shalt see him again," said Cromwell, in a really gentle tone, young lady, thou shalt see him again. There are too many here. But, a day or two hence, thou shalt see him again, where you can pour forth your thoughts to each other more conveniently;" and with a firm but not unkindly grasp he led her towards the door.

CHAPTER V.

It was in a dark narrow street in the eastern part of the city of London. The fine weather with which the month of September had commenced, was gone. Mist and rain had succeeded, and the sad equinox was howling as if in angry sorrow at the departure of summer. Oh, those old streets of London! how melancholy they looked in those days, when hardly a globe lamp at the corner of a cross-street threw a dim and dusky light aross the muddy pathway. They, too, were but a recent invention, and the solitary lantern borne by an old female domestic before the thrifty master, or half a dozen torches before some gay reveller, were still to be met after the sun had set, and the watch patrolled the streets, or slept in the sentry boxes, as they did in the reign of Queen Elisabeth or that of George the Third. It was a cold, wet, miserable night, when the whole aspect of the outside world was gloom; and it needed the glowing fire, the cheering glass, or that warmer blessing—a happy heart, to give even the look of cherfulness to the interior of man's dwelling. But in the room in that narrow back street to which the reader must now follow, there was little to enliven or even to relieve. There was no fire in the grate, a solitary candle on the table, and no sign of any repast. The wind shook the casements, the dingy wainscoting creaked and rattled, and the sad

chorus kept up by the wind, seemed like a thousand plaintive voices wanting to tell some sorrow.

By a small deal table in the middle of that gloomy room stood Sir Edward Langdale and his daughter Lucy. They were apparently waiting and listening, and they had to wait and listen long, for not less than ten minutes passed before any sound was heard, except the whistling and screaming of the wind and the creaking of the wood work. At length, however, the heavy hammer at the door struck with a quick, short knock, and Sir Edward ran out and admitted a tall, strong man, with beard closely shaved, and locks cut short. He was dressed in a suit of dark grey cloth, with a long iron-hilted rapier by his side, and carried in his hand one of those steeple-crowned hats which distinguished the strictest sect of Presbyterians in that day. Few, indeed, to behold him, would have thought him the same bold Serjeant Loftus whom we have seen before with Bernard March at the bloody skirmish of Goose Green. It was the same man, however; and on perceiving Sir Edward Langdale and Lucy he gave a large coarse sheet of paper into the hands of the latter, saying, "There, Mamselle, I have been so long in coming back because the General was holding forth to the soldiers in the guard-room. He called it a bit of comfortable doctrine, but to me it was uncomfortable enough; for I was forced to stand there by my good cousin Joel, and hum and keep my countenance, though I thought every moment I should have laughed; and I should, too, if it had not been thinking of my Lord, and that made me grave enough."

Sir Edward looked over Lucy's shoulder, and saw that it was an order under the hand of Oliver Cromwell

himself, to admit one Lucy Langdale to the cell of the prisoner called Bernard March, in the prison of the Commonwealth called Newgate, to confer with the said prisoner for the space of one hour.

"But is it true, Loftus," asked Sir Edward, "that the sentence is really pronounced? It was said that some cases had been adjourned."

"Lord bless you, Sir," answered the man. They made no distinctions. It was all done at one sweep; it was, that every man taken in arms against the Commonwealth, at or after the battle of Worcester, were to be banished to the colonies of America, and sold to the planters there, to defray the expenses of the journey. That was the sense of it, though I have not got the words quite right, for there was a heap more about mercy, and all that, which my cousin Joel read to me, but I cannot remember. Mercy, I dare say! To talk of mercy, when they are sending a noble earl like that to be sold for a slave. But still, you know, Mamselle, if they had not sent him there, they would cut his head off, and while there is life there is hope, the people say."

There was something more consolatory in the man's rough words than could have been found in a studied oration; and Lucy said, turning to Sir Edward, "Let us go, my father. I may tell him, is it not so?" she added, with some hesitation, as if she half feared her request would be denied, "that I will join him in the colonies —that I have your consent?"

"Ay!" replied Sir Edward, warmly, "That you have my command, and that we will find means to buy his liberty, if it cost us the last crown in our purses, or the last acre of our lands."

"Then let us go," said Lucy, "dear father, I am firmer now. Have no fear of your child, I was but overcome by the suddenness of our disasters; and time and thought brought back calmness. The very hope of seeing him gives me strength.

"The hope! Nay, the certainty, I trust," said Sir Edward, with a start. "Sergeant, who gave you this paper. Are you sure it is genuine?"

"The Lord General himself, as they call him," answered Loftus, "my cousin told him that I was blessed with new lights—tallow candles in brass sconces—and that I was willing to serve his excellency—he did not add, to six feet of hemp and a fall—but that I came to obtain a promise he had made to a young lady, in whose service I had been brought up, to let her see her lover, the Earl of Dartmoor—your pardon, Mamselle!—and then, he started and said, he had forgotten, and called for paper, and wrote the order. He gave it to me and said, "Bring it quickly, though in truth, it matters not, and a strange look came upon his face as if he would have laughed, and he added, "get you gone, or your Lady may be too late"—and looking at all the soldiers round, he began to talk about faith and grace and this poor land, and this poor simple people who had been misled."

"Let us go, my father: let us go," said Lucy, eagerly; "he said, we might be too late. It is strange he should, have forgotten, when he promised so strictly."

"He does not easily forget," replied Sir Edward Langdale. I can only think the ship is to sail during the night. But let us go. Put this great cloak round you. As far as the outer wards, doubtless, they will let me go

with you; but then you will have to go on alone. Is your heart firm, my girl?"

"As a rock," replied Lucy; and covering herself with the large cloak provided for her, she walked steadily towards the door of the house, while her father, calling to someone within to take care of the light, followed her out into the street.

Sergeant Loftus went before with a lantern; but the moment Lucy issued forth into the narrow street, the wind and the rain struck her, making her recoil, and almost taking away her breath. But still she advanced again, taking her father's arm, and with that constancy which is the peculiar gift of woman, buffeting with the storm, undismayed by the rude blast, and the dark and gloomy abyss into which she plunged.

The streets were well nigh deserted, though one poor creature—a wretched woman, in a tattered cloak, begged of them at a corner, and received a small piece of money, for which she prayed God speed them. There is as much misery under a commonwealth as under a despotism, and perhaps it is more general. On, on they went, through narrow lanes and crooked passages—for London was not then the London of the present day—sometimes losing their way and having to turn back, but finding it in the end, while Lucy struggled on without a murmur, till at length they stood opposite a heavy building, very much unlike the "Newgate" of the present times.

Far advanced into the street was a strong fortified gate, probably the barbacan of one of the entrances into the City, and there were soldiers at the door; but no opposition was made to the proceedings of the party till

they had reached an iron gate leading into the inner court. There they were stopped by some stout rough men, who demanded to see their pass; but who on seeing the writing of the Lord General, told them to go on, and opened the wicket. Some thirty or forty yards farther, as they passed along a plastered and somewhat dilapitated passage, another iron grate presented itself, with a large lantern burning behind, and two men smoking pipes and seemingly half asleep.

Here, however, the examination was more strict, and some difficulty was made to the admission of Sir Edward Langdale and Sergeant Loftus farther into the interior of the building. Lucy hardly heard what was said, for her mind was so completely filled with the thoughts of the interview that was approaching that she could hardly admit any thing else into the council chamber of the brain. She had a faint impression, however, that some one said, "It is my daughter and my servant," and that some money was given, and that she recovered greatly when she was again hurried forward, and another heavily studded iron door presented itself.

There a man, almost gigantic, with a large key in his hand appeared, and read the pass with great care. He grumbled something about the number of prisoners, and the quantity of passes, and his reverence for the Lord General; but ended by unlocking the door, and telling Lucy to go straight forward till she saw a warder. "He will show you the cell," he said, "it is one apart; by superior authority. Marry, he is greatly favored, when we have sometimes five in a room not bigger than a baker's oven. You two stay here," he continued, "the pass is for the girl alone."

No remonstrances or persuasions had any effect, and opposing his burly person in the aperture of the half open door, he led Sir Edward and Loftus back, while he suffered Lucy to pass in, and called to a warder who was creeping along at the other end of the passage with a lantern in his hand, bidding him admit the "young woman" to cell forty four, under a pass from the Lord General.

The warder's lantern was the only light in the corridor, if it could be called so, and a dim obscurity reigned within, but there were several persons passing about, and one of them, in hurrying by, ran rudely against the poor girl, who had hardly strength to stand. She recoiled against the wall at the side, and was only conscious that something which felt like a paper had been put into her hand, when the warder called her roughly to come on, and in a moment or two after opened a door upon the right, saying aloud, "A young woman to see you, Master!" and held up the light to let her find her way in.

The lantern, though dim enough, sent its dusky rays all round the little cell, as Lucy, with shaking limbs and beating heart, approached the door. Her eyes ran gently round from side to side, but there was no one there, and instantly concluding that they had removed him for ever from the shores of England, ere she could see him again, she uttered a shrill, almost despairing cry, and fell upon the ground.

The crowded state of the prison, the number of persons who were in the passages, the faintness of the light, and the sudden rush forward of Sir Edward Langdale, as soon as he heard his daughter's voice, together with

the short, useless struggle of the turnkey to keep him back, and the hurrying up of several warders and a soldier, to see what was the matter, produced, for several minutes, a scene seldom beheld within those gloomy walls. Sorrow, and despair, and agony they witnessed often enough; but those commonly marched on with the slow tread of tragedy, without haste or bustle; but now every thing was confusion. The large doors at each end of the passage were closed; and, while Sir Edward Langdale held his child in his arms and questioned her eagerly, the empty cell was strictly examined, but in vain.

For a short time Lucy did not, for she could not, answer; but at length she said, "Oh, my father, they have sent him into banishment without letting me see him as it was promised. It was cruel of the Lord General so to deceive me."

"No, young woman," said the warder, who had just come forth from the cell. "He is not there, sure enough; but he has not been sent away. Here comes the governor, however, and he will soon tell whether you have not had some hand in this yourself. The investigation which followed, however, led to no results. At first the head gaoler, or Lieutenant Governor (a rank which, I believe, he bore), threatened, blustered, and spoke high; but the safe conduct and pardon under Cromwell's own hand and seal, which Sir Edward Langdale carried, and the pass given to Lucy that very night, with the Lord General's undoubted injunction, soon removed any suspicion which had at first fallen upon them. The soldiers and turnkeys defended themselves as best they could, asserting earnestly that no one had passed since they came on duty two hours before, but some of the officers of the

prison, and gradually the chief seemed to change their views, and to conclude that instead of denouncing all and everybody to the Lord General, as they had at first menaced, it would be as well to say as little upon the subject beyond the prison walls as possible. "Amongst such a number of captives as we have got here", said he, "some must contrive to get away. Why, Mostyn and Middleton escaped from the Tower, where there were only five or six, while here we count by thousands. One out of such a number will probably not be missed, and if he be, I must make the money good."

Sir Edward Langdale would not even betray, by a smile, a happy suspicion that crossed his mind, but drew Lucy's arm through his, and asked the officer if they would be permitted to depart. No opposition was made, and only a hint added, in a low tone, that it would be better to keep silence upon all that had occurred that night. "The sooner you go out of the country, I should judge, the better," said the officer, "your safe conduct has not long to run." Sir Edward made no reply, but passed on, and soon found himself and Lucy in the street with Loftus who, was eager to hear what had caused the commotion, but kept silence at a word from the knight, till, through the same storm of wind and rain, they entered the small house whence they had started an hour or two before.

An old woman led them in and lighted the candles, saying: "Oh, my pretty Lady, you are mighty wet. You had better go up and change your clothes."

"Presently, presently, Mistress Groves," said Lucy, "go up and light me a bit of fire in my room. I must rest and take breath for a moment."

The landlady of their little lodging was discreet, as all landladies ought to be, and at the word she left the three, who had just returned, together.

Confused with all that had passed, Lucy gazed imploringly in her father's face, seeking some comfort from his better judgement of the events which had confounded her's.

"He has escaped, my child—I do trust he has escaped," said Sir Edward, kissing her cheek, "but what is that, Lucy, you keep so tight in your hand. You gave the pass to the jailor."

"I do not know," answered Lucy, throwing a small paper on the table. "A man ran against me in the prison passage, and I found that in my hand."

"The Earl's writing! The Earl's writing!" exclaimed Sergeant Loftus, who looked at the paper without ceremony. "A man dashed by me just after you went in, and the door keeper did not try to stop him."

"And by me," said the knight, "but that was not Bernard;" and taking up the paper, he read the few words written upon it. They were simply, "In France, not in Virginia! on the Rance, not on the James."

CHAPTER VI.

THERE is only one thing in all the world which can give any writer permanent popularity, and this is, Truthfulness—truthfulness in feeling, truthfulness in character, truthfulness of description; and this is thine especial quality most dear and excellent of men, Washington Irving, which, as long as the English language is spoken, as long as purity and good taste are felt, as long as goodness and truth are loved, will give thy works a hold upon the world's heart which never can be loosened. Eloquent nonsense may be admired in the present day; the struggles for the reputation of large thought may excite the world's half compassionate attention for a time; but simple truthfulness is in the end the child we all love, and the one who inherits. I am about to describe places and scenes which you and I beheld more than thirty years ago. May a portion of thy genius give me a portion of thy truthfulness; for genius is but truth.*)

What did the French ever do that God should have so blessed them with a land, the richest and the most beautiful, a climate the most genial and the most equable that ever was known to man? There are barren spots enough, there are cloudy and tempestuous days, there are places devoid of picturesque or rural beauty; but take the Pyrenees and Auvergne, and the Jura, and the Vosges, and Vaucluse, and the Rhone, and the poison plenty of to-day and the historical memories of yesterday, and the prospects of to-morrow, there is no land like France.

*) Written before the death of my friend.

Its inhabitants are too happy. They have nothing to desire but change.

In a spot upon the shores of France, not far from that on which now stands the picturesque and pleasant village of St. S— — — were, at the time I speak of, some four or five small neat houses of the more comfortable sort, and perhaps fifty dwellings of less pretention, but comfortable too. Not more than a mile distant. was the shore, where the sea curled and sparkled upon the sand, and the high bank, on which the houses were built, was itself probably but a barrier which old ocean had himself raised against the rude frolicks of his own children.

At the windows of one of the better houses I have mentioned, on one of the first days of October, stood a party looking anxiously towards the sea, on which a small ship, apparently of less than fifty tons burden, had been seen for some hours tacking towards the shore against an adverse wind. That wind was blowing very hard, and though the sky was clear, the blue waves were running high, and long lines of white crested billows stretched out as far as the eye could reach. The first question which was agitated amongst those now gazing out was the nationality of the little vessel, and the next was her safety; for although Sir Edward Langdale pointed out to those who stood by that the wind was off the land, and consequently there was much less danger in her near approach to the shore than they imagined, yet neither Lucy nor Lady Langdale could divest their minds of a feeling of dread. Perhaps all they had lately gone through had served rather to decrease their courage than to augment it, and from the time they had reached the shores of

France an undefined apprehension regarding the fate of him whom they had left behind had grown up almost into a presentiment of coming evil.

In those days it did not very frequently happen that an English vessel entered the port of St. Malo which, with its beautiful bay, lay some five miles to the left of where the spectators stood, and it was the eagerness with which the peasantry and the fishermen crowded down to the beach to watch the small ship, as well as her peculiar build, that convinced Sir Edward Langdale she was a foreign vessel. He had taken means, however, if not to ascertain the fact more accurately, at least to obtain the opinion of the hardy sailors of the Breton coast, and as they stood there watching they could see good old Pierrot la Grange trudging up the hill towards them.

"An English ship, sir, an English ship!" said Pierrot, as he entered. "The men say they saw the flag this morning, though she has got it down now on account of the wind, I suppose."

"See, see," cried Lucy, "they are putting out a boat. Surely no boat can live in such a sea as that."

"Oh yes," answered Sir Edward, "but it is a bad coast, and it would be better to make for the port."

"They cannot get in, sir," said Pierrot la Grange, "and there is a large ugly looking ship out there in the distance, they might not like to meet with."

"I will go down to the beach and see," said Sir Edward Langdale. "We may be able to give some assistance."

Henry Langdale accompanied his father and Pierrot; and Lady Langdale and Lucy still remained watching, with no little anxiety in the heart of each; for each mo-

ment the vague anxiety of which I have spoken increased, as they saw the boat first receive what seemed some common sailors, and then two other persons, who even at that distance, could be distinguished as belonging to a different class. Then came the struggling with the wind and the waves, and, tossed up and down, sometimes nothing but the sail was visible, and sometimes the boat itself, in crossing a wave, seemed almost tossed up into the air. The distance was long, and made still longer by the oblique course which the wind compelled the voyagers to take, till at length the sail was hauled down and the crew were seen to take to their oars.

It was a dreadful moment for poor Lucy Langdale, and for nearly twenty minutes the torture of suspense continued; but still the little barque bore or towards the shore, and now doubt became certainty, and fear changed almost into joy, for, in the figure which sat in the stern of the boat and held the rudder, she felt sure she beheld the form of Bernard March. Not two hundred yards remained to be passed ere the keel would have touched the shore, when, from some cause not apparent from the window, the boat seemed to quiver for a moment and then went over. All seemed confusion on the beach; and several men were seen clinging to the bottom of the boat. But one plunged boldly into the sea, and while an irresistible scream burst from Lucy's lips, Lady Langdale exclaimed, "He is swimming, my love, he is swimming. God help your father, he has put off a boat to aid them."

Still the stout swimmer buffeted the waves towards the shore, still the men clung to the capsized boat, and still Sir Edward Langdale, with a gallant crew of fisher-

men, bore on towards the drowning men. They saw him come nearer and nearer, pause for a moment to rescue the swimmer, and then, plying every limb, make on towards the little barque. But ere he could reach it three or four of the men dropped from their hold and sank, and only two, it seemed, were taken off.

The dangerous part of the navigation was now to come: for the wind was blowing more fiercely than ever; but the crew of Sir Edward Langdale knew the coast well, and avoiding the sharp current which had caught the other boat, they came steadily on towards the shore, not without labor and difficulty, but in safety.

And where was Lucy Langdale when the bold men on the beach ran down almost to their shoulders in the water, and helped to pull the boat ashore? She was hardly a hundred yards distant, for when she saw it as she thought, as she hoped, out of danger, the impulse overcame her, and without a word to her mother, without preparation, almost without knowing what she did, she rushed forth from the house, and ran down the hill with a step of light.

She saw him, she saw him, as he sprang out of the boat, him whom she had more than once thought lost to her for ever. He saw her, too, and in a minute more they were locked in each other's arms.

Nature and natural affection always find a response in the human heart, and the rude peasantry gave a cheer.

CHAPTER VII.

"Joy amidst sorrow, dear Lucy!" said Bernard March, after a short burst of feeling, which could not be repressed. "I little thought to meet you on this beach; but hie thee away to your home, wherever it is, dear girl, and take Henry with you for your guard. Your father must stay with me for a few minutes."

"Oh come, Bernard, come!" said Lucy, "I fear to part with you now, even for a moment. It seems all so like a dream, I dread to wake and find the vision vanished."

"Alas, dear Lucy," replied the Earl, "there are things beneath yonder rough sea which prove the vision, with all its joys and sorrows, but too true. Beneath those wild waves lies a friend—one who has proved himself a friend in need and in deed; and I cannot suffer his body to be cast on this shore without some one to tend it. Take Henry with you to protect you, and I will join you soon."

Lucy hung her head. "It is all mixed," she said. "Can there be nothing like pure happiness here below. Let Henry stay with you. Protection? I need none. There is not one of these rough men who would not protect me. They are all kind to me, and I have striven to be kind to them since we have been here. I will do what you tell me; but I fear, when I am away, you may be rash in your efforts—No, no, no. I am foolish, Bernard.

Forgive me! You will not forget that Lucy has lived only for this hour."

"And I have struggled for it against fate;" answered Bernard March. "There is nothing I would not do for Lucy Langdale. I would die for her; and what is more in these sad times, I have lived for her. I will not even risk the life which God has spared, lest I should bring sorrow upon her for whom that life was saved. Let that content you, my love. I will guard my life for you."

Her father interposed and urged her to depart, and he and Lord Dartmoore remained upon the beach, while the good fishermen gathered round them.

"There is no use in staying, Messieurs," said some of the men in the jargon of the country, seeming to comprehend at once the object of the two gentlemen, "the bodies will not come ashore till the tide turns, and not then, unless the wind changes. At best, they may be found miles down to the westward. We have seen many a son, and many a brother, go down in that cursed eddy, and we know where to look for them after that."

Then let them be well looked for, said the Earl: "Two crowns of gold apiece for every body that is recovered! There is no hope, I fear," he added in a sad tone, "that any one of them is still living."

The fishermen, who had no personal interest in the men who had gone down, and were hardened by the habit of endurance, had almost laughed; but the elder man said gravely, "They are with Christ. You might as well try to put life into that rock as to wake them from the sleep they sleep."

A short gaze on the tempestuous sea showed the

Earl that the efforts that he dreamed of—for they were but as a dream—were hopeless, and after a time and a few more words and promises to the fishermen, he climbed the hill slowly with Sir Edward Langdale.

"Who is it?" asked the knight. "I see your mind is fixed upon one. I can hardly guess at any one. Who is it?"

"Alas, Sir Edward," answered Bernard March, "it is Richard Langdale, your own brother. Let us say no more now. I shall have to tell the whole story hereafter; and were it not for dear Lucy, I could have wished that the sea had taken me and left him; for though he may have behaved ill to you in days long past, his conduct since we first met has nobly atoned for whatever he formerly did amiss."

"May he find peace!" said Sir Edward. "If he ever did me wrong, it is forgiven and out of mind. It is a sad chance, Bernard; but we had so nearly met with one so much more sad, that this seems lighter. Come, let us go on."

They had paused for a short time, and when they resumed their way up the hill, Bernard added somewhat ruefully, "When first I took refuge in your house, Sir Edward, I had but a small valise, a good sword, and a lean horse. The valise is beneath yon sea, the sword is a trophy of our foes, and the horse lies on Worcester field. I come to seek my bride, unarmed and on foot."

"She is as glad to see you so as if you brought her a carcanet of diamonds," replied the knight. "For all the rest we will find means; for you must change those dripping garments, at once; and my own Lucette has brought enough to pay all you promised to the fisher-

men. I thank the good God, who has given us ease—the third best of all his blessings."

"The third?" said the Earl, in a meditative tone.

"Ay, the third! replied the knight, "First, love, general love—for my God, for my fellow creatures, a part of my love for God. That is his first and greatest blessing: next is health of body and of mind; and next is that ease in wordly circumstances which gives us enough—no more. We have enough, Bernard, and that is better than a diamond mine."

"I can well believe it," answered Bernard March, "for this day diamonds had well nigh sunk me beneath those waves. My good kinswoman, Lady Janet, sent me a collar of brilliants for Lucy, and I could not cast it into the waters. I had a few others which added little to the weight; but I knew I might need them, and would not throw them away. A straw, they say, will sink a drowning man; and, though I swim well, my strength was failing, when the boat came up. Let us on, however, Sir Edward, let us on! All in this world depends upon our dividing our short time well. To be good economists, we must know the value of each moment. I have given too many, perhaps, to things that were hopeless—to things that were over. I must give the rest to that which comprehends the future as well as the past. God grant I be not selfish; for the present is mine own, and to it I must bend all my thoughts."

Let us pass over the next few hours rapidly—nay, without any pause. I will give the reason, presently, why I hurry my tale so rapidly on.

The common, rude, wooden shutters of a French country house were up before the windows. The fires, which even

October requires in all but southern climates, were lighted, and the wide hearth burned cheerily with piles of crackling wood. Round about sat Sir Edward Langdale and his wife, and Henry, and Lucy, with her hand clasped in that of Bernard March. A little behind but still seated, was good old Pierrot la Grange; for in that house, hired for the occasion, and at that time, when sympathetic feelings levelled artificial distinctions, the old servant took place amongst his masters.

The Earl was telling the history of his escape. We must abridge it, for it was long, each act, each incident, having an interest for his hearers which we should fail to convey were we to attempt the detail.

He had been conveyed to London, he said, by rapid marches, and yet, strange to say, his wound, though severe, had healed gradually, but perfectly. His short, somewhat unlawful, trial had taken place with that of a number of others, and he had said nothing to distinguish himself from the rest. To his surprise no one came forward to prove against him ought but that he had fought in opposition to the Parliamentary army at Worcester, and he was found guilty and condemned as a common soldier. The sentence upon all was the same: to be banished the country for ever, and sold as slaves to the colonies.

All was dark enough, yet through all there came a faint glimmer of that blessed light of hope which teaches and enables to endure. But while waiting for the announcement that a ship was ready to carry him to the place of his long banishment, he was told that a stranger, a minister of religion from Savoy, desired to see him, and when admitted, he found in the stranger

the monk whom he had first met in concealment at the house of his kinswoman at Child's Wickham, and who had afterwards tended him at Buckley. Long explanations succeeded, and the monk undertook to obtain for him the means of attempting his escape. Then came events of which the Earl himself could give no clear explanation. A large sum of money was produced—probably from the Lady Janet—a necklace of diamonds was brought to him for Lucy, and he was told to be ready to fly to the place of concealment prepared for him at a fixed hour on the following evening. Then came intelligence that only an hour later Lucy was to visit him in prison, and though to depart without seeing her cost a bitter struggle, the whole hopes of the future were perilled, and he consented.

The chief jailer was undoubtedly bribed by a large sum, and probably the inferiors were gained by means somewhat similar; but the Earl, to the last day of his life, had a suspicion that Cromwell himself had closed his eyes to much that passed. It was easy to do so; for it could not be expected that in his position he should look to details; but we have already expressed our belief, that the great warrior never suffered the human sympathies, often evolved by circumstances working upon a naturally kindly nature, to act upon his fixed purposes.

However that may be, Lord Dartmoor met with no impediment within the prison. He seemed to be clothed with the invisible coat of the fairy tale for all the jailers, and about two hours before the visit of Lucy passed out to the lodging provided for him as quietly as if he were walking freely to his home.

He knew not where she was to be found; but the

monk agreed to remain at the prison; and give her the billet that Bernard left to make her acquainted with his escape and his intentions.

Shortly before her coming, the guards and the turnkeys were changed, but he contrived to linger in the passes till he heard his brother's ever remembered voice, and then he exhibited the pass he had obtained, and running against poor Lucy, contrived to press into her hand the information he desired to give.

An interval of many days followed ere any vessel could be hired to convey the fugitives to the coast of France, but at length a smuggling cutter was engaged, and the disastrous voyage was commenced. From the first, the monk seemed impressed with a presentiment that his life was drawing to a close. He threw it not away, he did nothing rashly, but when finding themselves pursued by a ship of the Commonwealth, Lord Dartmoor proposed to land in a boat, and gave a large sum to the unwilling sailors to carry him to the shore Richard Langdale confided to him papers and jewels of some value, and pressed his hand kindly, saying, "Remember me."

They were the last words he spoke, for every thought of himself and his companion was occupied by the perils of their stormy voyage to the shore; and the Earl had just said, without reply, "There are people down upon the beach to help us," when the boat got into the cross current caused by the rocks, and went over.

There was many a detail and many a question, and many an explanation and eager looks, and beating hearts, and breaths long drawn, while the narrative was going

on; but such was the tale told by Bernard March, and the imagination of the reader must supply minutiæ, some of which we cannot give.

CHAPTER VIII.

I have not yet quite forgotten the promise which I made at the end of a book published not long ago, and called "Lord Montague's Page," but very little remains to be told, and that is related solely to gratify those readers who always like to know what became of everybody. The best course to pursue in order to gratify them, may be to give a picture, rather than a narration, and therein to introduce at the end of about eight years, the portraits of those who have figured in the preceding papers.

In this work it has been needful, with painful care, to tread wârily, lest I should put my feet in the footprints of those who have previously trodden the same ground. Though I may admire, I would not imitate; and it is my habit, in writing upon a given time or subject, to put aside all works which have treated of the same themes; but this very course may lead, by inadvertence, to the faults we would avoid, and bring over our writing a faint shadow of half remembered things in the performances of others.

I trust, however, that no such traces of other works will be found here. I took for my principal character, a young nobleman, a true Cavalier, whose prototype will be easily

remembered by those who have studied the history of the "Great Rebellion." I may have altered many of the circumstances, changed many of the details of his gallant and chivalrous life—to embellish them was impossible—but the main facts are correct. His devotion, as a mere boy, to the service of his king, by his brother, one of a race of heroes, his love for the gentler arts of life, and the heroic courage and military skill which won for him the dignity of an Earldom when a mere youth: are here not attributed to him solely. His portrait may be seen amongst those in "Lodge," and the noble, but gentle soul is beaming from every feature.

In the full pride of health and youth, for he was not yet thirty, he sat before the fair Chateau of Mirepoix, gazing on the gambols of two young children, bright and beautiful as those which the great masters of the pencil have taken as their images of blessed spirits, where neither guile, nor passion, nor sin have ever entered. Speaking to him over his shoulder was his dear Lucy, not the least faded by time, but perhaps a little touched by sorrows, which not even the breath of joy and the fragrance of renewed hope had been enabled entirely to wipe out. But she saw in those children, as they sported on the green, the return of the two brothers she had loved and lost, and there was a strange mystic connection in memory between the devoted care which she and Bernard had bestowed upon the dear ones gone, and the love and joy found in the dear ones present, which raised up hope and confirmed faith. It seemed as if they were her dead young brothers come back, and that they were her children.

In the fine old arabesqued balcony above, sat Sir

Edward Langdale, with his ever dear Lucette; and as they saw their Lucy say something to her husband, and point to the road, Sir Edward called to him, saying, "It is Henry, Bernard. I fear more bad news from the Low Countries. God send they may leave us here in peace; but he would not come back if he had not some news to bring."

The Earl of Dartmoor turned his eyes towards the road, where a horseman, apparently a stout young man, followed by several servants, was riding on towards the Chateau. The next moment one of those who followed him pushed forward, spoke a word or two to his leader as he passed, and then galloped on without much care of his horse's wind, as he urged him up the hill. He passed the gates, he came on, and all soon recognised the hard features and spare form of good old Pierrot la Grange. It might be, he had forgotten the abstinence he had acquired and adhered to, in his latter days. It might be that some joy had produced as much effect upon him as strong wine; but as he saw the little group at the Chateau, he took off his hat and waved it, and as he came nearer, he shouted forth in his still strong voice the verses which soon became common:

"Oliver Cromwell lies in his bed,
"Oliver Cromwell lies in his bed;
"The devil came for him before he was dead,
"As Oliver Cromwell lay in his bed."

"Dead!" exclaimed Sir Edward Langdale. "Dead!" said the Earl of Dartmoor, but he added with a very grave look, "He murdered my King, and subdued my country; but he was a gentleman. God rest his soul! Come hither Pierrot," he continued. "What further news?

It is hard to believe that the rebellious spirit of the country should expire with the breath of one man. When came those tidings? Are they sure?"

"As sure my Lord, as death," answered Pierrot, "who had dismounted and walked up. The news reached Brussels a good many days ago. Since then we have had post upon post; and all men's hearts are raised; for it is clear that the present state of things can last no longer."

He judged rightly, it would seem. When power, tranquillity and order depend alone upon one man's life, the future has but frail security. With rapid march, events went on; day by day, the tendency of the ever vacillating public mind became more and more apparent, and in a few months Bernard March took his seat in the House of Peers as Earl of Dartmoor, and Edward Langdale as Baron of Buckley. They were both men of sense and of much experience, yet both were somewhat carried away by the enthusiasm of the day; but both soon found that hope and expectation were mistaken. The agitation of the sea does not subside with the cessation of the storm. The reaction of popular commotion is often as disastrous to the people as its existence; and it is well known that the end of the great rebellion was followed by evils more terrible than those which excited it; but there was a refuge from the tempest which some were wise enough to seek, and in private life and domestic happiness the two cavaliers found, at last, that peace which was only for a short time interrupted by the more peaceful and beneficient changes of 1688.

THE END.

THE ITALIAN SISTERS.

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On the twenty-fourth of April, 1820, I received a visit in my chambers from my cousin William, whom I had not seen or heard of for eight years. He wished me to arrange his affairs for him, and I went to spend a few days for that purpose at his house in ——shire, where the necessity of some explanations induced him to relate his own history.

I was traveling in Italy in the year —, and had letters of introduction to several good families in different parts of the country. Among the rest was one to the Marquis of Spezzia, who had at one time lived about three years in England, as minister from the Court of Florence. On his return he had gone to Milan, where I had expected to find him; but on inquiring for him in that city, I found that he had since inherited some property in Tuscany, and was living in the Via Ghibbelina, in Florence. On my arrival in the capital of Tuscany, I went to an hotel on the Lung-Arno, and in the even-

ing proceeded to deliver my letters. The Palazzo Spezzia was a very handsome building, surrounding a quadrangle. In fact, all that side of the street is built in the same manner, with houses fit for princes, and very often beggars living in them. The marquis, indeed, was not reputed so poor as many of the Italian nobility; but yet not rich enough to occupy the whole of so large a building. He consequently reserved to himself the first floor (the second as they call it there), and let the rest of his house to an English family, more noble by name than by nature.

To make my tale clear, I may as well say, that this family consisted of a younger brother of Lord Conway, as I shall call him (though that was not his real name), his wife, and two or three young children. The whole of the Conway family had made themselves somewhat notorious for looseness of morals; but I never heard this gentleman particularly ill spoken of, and his wife, though apparently caring very little about her husband's conduct, was without reproach in regard to her own. He was a man of thirty-three or thirty-four at this time, tolerably well looking, though not remarkably so, but with a sleepy blue eye, and quiet, insinuating manner, which I have often remarked in men more successful than scrupulous in the pursuit of pleasure. I had met him once or twice in London, and always looked upon him as the best of his family.

But let me return to my tale. On mounting the stairs from the great entrance, under what they would call the *porte cochère* in France, I found a pair of enormous doors, with a bell-handle hanging from a long thick wire, and, on my ringing, one valve of these doors was opened

by a black-looking Italian servant, who admitted me into a great hall, round the top of which ran a gallery, ornamented with twelve very well executed marble statues, and serving as a communication from one side of the house to the other, without passing the entrance staircase, which might be considered as almost a part of the street. In this large hall, almost big enough to contain a modern house, I was left by the servant, while he went past to ask if his master would receive me; and the blinds being all shut, with but a faint light without, there was something ghastly and sinister in the aspect of the place, with the white statues gleaming like ghosts above, that marked my first steps into the Palazzo Spezzia with a feeling akin to awe. I stood still, with my arms folded on my breast, gazing round me; but I had hardly been there a minute, when I heard steps apparently approaching, and I fancied it was the servant returning, but no door opened.

Soon a sound of murmuring voices succeeded—voices apparently in low and earnest conversation—and the eye, guided by the ear, turned toward the gallery, where, in the spectre-like gloom, I saw two figures slowly pass along from the one side of the house to the other. They were those of a man and a woman; but no feature could I distinguish, and even the outline of the form of each was faint and indistinct. They were in very lover-like proximity, however, and I could see that the lady, whoever she was, must be tall and commanding in person, while the man, who seemed to have his arm around her waist, was hardly, if at all, above the middle height. The murmured words only reached my ear as vague and indefinite sounds; but still, the two speakers did not

apparently know that any one was there below; for they paused for a few moments in the middle of the gallery, and were only scared away, I believe, by the sudden appearance of a light.

This time it was the servant who appeared; but he came lighting in the marquis himself, who welcomed me with great hospitality, and a warmth of manner not usual in the Italian nobility. He had been under great obligations, he said, to the friend who introduced me, and he was delighted to have an opportunity, if not to return his kindness, to show his sense of it in some degree. He led me into his own little library, or study, where I found he had surrounded himself with objects of *vertù*—which are equal to Paradise in the eyes of an Italian—and after sitting and chatting for some time over old scenes and remembrances, he begged the pleasure of introducing me to his daughters. In the saloon to which he led me, we found but one young lady present, a dark-eyed, beautiful girl, of perhaps nineteen, very delicately formed, and small in all her proportions. The marquis asked where her sister was, and she replied, somewhat languidly, she did not know; but being introduced, and seated by her on the sofa, I soon contrived to rouse her from her sort of apathetic mood. She spoke English almost as her native language, and my Italian being villainously bad, the conversation was speedily carried on in no other tongue than my own. I never met with any other Italian but herself who had a real heartfelt fondness for England. Its often weeping skies themselves she loved, and described how delighted she would be sometimes to drive out in a spring shower, when the drops were mingled with sunshine, and the

whole earth put on a joyful freshness of aspect, which it rarely, if ever, knows in Italy. She had, in short, become completely imbued with the spirit of English rural life, which requires early initiation and long habit, I believe, for its full appreciation. Sympathies were speedily awakened, and, while I did full justice to her own beautiful country, I was very much charmed with the rarity of finding a foreigner do justice to mine.

Her father mingled in the conversation, but, I thought with some constraint. Something seemed to embarras and preoccupy him; but at length the door opened, and a tall, marvelously handsome girl entered, perhaps two or three years older than the other. Her whole countenance was queenlike and majestic, notwithstanding a somewhat flushed and agitated look, and her figure was remarkably fine. But I could not help thinking that there was a remarkable resemblance between that figure and one of the two phantoms which had passed along the gallery of the hall.

This was the eldest daughter of the marquis, and she received me with a distant stateliness which soon made me fall back upon the conversation of her sister. The elder did not seem to be at all displeased at being left to her own thoughts, and I remained more than an hour in very agreeable conversation with Signora Beatrice and her father, while the other labored through a small portion of some lady's ornamental work, seeming to exert herself very diligently, and yet make small progress. I then took my leave; but the marquis came to call upon me on the following day, bearing with him an invitation to dinner, and did all he could to show kind and hospitable attention to a stranger. In short, I al-

most became domesticated in the family. Every day some expedition was proposed, something to be done, something to be seen, and the time glided away very pleasantly and very swiftly. My new friend had an excellent knowledge and appreciation of art, and took care that I should see all the marvels of the pencil or the chisel which the city of Florence contains, nor were any objects of interest in the neighborhood omitted, nor any historical monuments. But as I am not writing a guide-book, I must omit all details, dwelling merely upon that which affected me as a man, rather than as a man of taste. Often, when we went forth for a stroll through the city, or passed the morning at the Petti, or in the great gallery, we were accompanied by Beatrice, though her stately sister generally thought fit to remain at home on these occasions. When we made any more distant expeditions, however, sometimes spending one or two more days out of Florence, Signora Narcissa always accompanied us, evidently greatly against her will, and she was not a personage at all to conceal her distaste for any thing that did not please her. She contrived to diminish our enjoyment very greatly; sometimes by petulant sallies, which I wondered that her father bore with patience; sometimes by a cold, sauntering sort of indifference, still more provoking.

I had hardly been in Florence a fortnight, however, before I began to gain some insight into the cause of her conduct. At first, it came as a mere suspicion, very painful; but not definite. Mr. Conway was frequently of our parties: Mistress Conway rarely; and I remarked two things which soon led me right to distressing conclusions. Our English acquaintance never in the pre-

sence of her father paid any very marked attention to the beautiful Narcissa; but when the Marquis himself was absent, even for a moment, he was sure to be at her side, with his soft, and somewhat sleepy manner, and low-toned musical voice. At other times, an occasional low-spoken word, a glance of quick intelligence, or a look of tender meaning were the only signs of concealed intimacy between them. This was what first roused doubts in my mind. The second thing, was, that whenever Conway was of the party, the young lady was perfectly gay and cheerful. Combining these facts with the glimpse I had obtained of them in the gallery on my first visit, I could not help believing that there was a better understanding between them than was consistent with her safety, and his position. I was still, as it were, a stranger, although intimacy had rapidly grown up between myself and the Marquis of Spezzia. It was the friendship of feeling, but not of years; and such affections of the mind are like things formed in clay, or cast in iron, and they require time to cool and harden them. I liked him much. Thin, and pale, and anxious looking as he was, there was something exceedingly prepossessing in his countenance. His conduct through life had been irreproachable, and he had too many enthusiasms to be a very accomplished hypocrite. Sentiments spoken, or written, often deceive us; for where there is deliberation there is art; but where sentiments are accidentally discovered, or instincts suddenly betrayed, there is less chance of a keen observer being deceived. Still, the date of our frienship was very late, and I did not feel myself justified in calling the father's notice to the danger of his daughter, feeling the difficulty increased per-

haps by a belief that he might have averted the peril. The standard of morality is not very high in Italy, it is true, and we find few in that land who can even conceive its being placed so high as in England; but yet, many a chance word, and casual observation showed that my Italian friend deeply regretted the very general depravity of morals which prevailed in his own country. Still, I hesitated—still, I thought I might be mistaken—still, I considered delicacy and prudence; perhaps more than justice and right. Let me confess the whole truth, however, while I am telling this dark tale. The beauty and the grace, the gentleness and the frankness of Beatrice di Spezzia had produced upon me an impression not easily to be shaken off; and, not knowing what might be the result if I ventured to call her father's attention to her sister's conduct toward Mr. Conway, my hesitation was increased by consideration for her. I must not say that I was actually in love with her. She was a great deal younger than I was—some ten or twelve years at least—and I was still in that stage of passion wherein the dreams of Plato become tangible realities, and we fancy that something deeper, though colder than love, can exist between two persons of different sexes, even in the early spring of life.

A little incident may have had some share in determining my conduct. The Marquis had a villa on the slope of the Apennines, a little below the small hotel of Three Masks, and not very far distant from the village of Gherini. The summer was coming on. The family were soon about to remove thither from Florence, and we all went out for a few days in the fine spring time, ot see arrangements made, and order some repairs. The

house was not in the best order; but the weather was summer-like and serene, and the greater part of our time was passed out of doors. Our party consisted of the Marquis, his two daughters and myself, and Mr. Conway and his wife had not been invited. Monsieur di Spezzia had a notion of laying out a garden near the villa in the English style; but I easily showed a man of his real taste that, when done, it would not harmonize at all with the character of the building and the scene, and he applied himself to finish and restore a handsome but formal Italian garden, laid out by some former proprietor. He was thus occupied a great part of each day. Narcissa was in one of her dull, and solitary moods, and remained all the morning in her own chamber. Beatrice went out with me—not to any distance from the house, but to a little spot just below the plain of the garden, where we were within some eighty or a hundred yards of the spot where her father sat, superintending the labors of his workmen. I had taken a book of English poems, to beguile any dull moments pleasantly, and it was very pleasant and sweet to hear that beautiful girl syllable the lines of English verse, with a strong Italian accent, but a full appreciation of the words. It was a very difficult thing in such a scene, and such a moment to avoid what is called falling in love, and, indeed, I did not try it very much; for I was my own master, and there was no law against my picking up a gem wherever I might find one. I had done reading a passage, and dropped the book upon my knee, to dwell upon the thoughts which the poet suggested. Beatrice was sitting a little farther down, with her head leaning back against the bank, and her beautiful small feet cros-

sed over each other, when, suddenly, I saw something move slowly through the low myrtles which carpeted that part of the ground, and a moment after, a snake of that species called the black viper—the most venomous in Italy—raised its head, close by her feet, as if surprised and irritated by the obstacle in its way, and about to bite her. I rose instantly, took one step forward, and at the second, set the heel of my boot upon the reptile's head.

"What is the matter?" she cried, seeing me press my foot hard into the sand.

"Only a viper," I answered; and then, without meaning any particular allusion, I added, "I really know not whether it was most rash or reasonable to try to kill him thus at your very feet, where, if I had missed my tread, he might have stung you."

"Oh, right, right," she exclaimed, eagerly; but then she rose, and clasped her hands together, saying, after a pause, "It is always right to set your foot upon a serpent's head—doubtless, you have saved my life."

She spoke very slowly, and earnestly; but the next moment, she resumed an easier, if not a lighter tone, explained to me that the creature she saw lying there was exceedingly poisonous, and that she had often known domestic animals, and even young children die from the bite; but all her commonplaces could not obliterate from my mind the earnestness with which she had said "It is always right to set your foot upon a serpent's head." I fancied I could hardly doubt that those words had some latent meaning, and the suddenness with which she changed her tone, only served to confirm the impression.

I resolved to watch more closely than ever, and I thought to have an opportunity that very day; for Mr.

Conway rode out, just to see how his friend the marquis was going on, he said. But a great change had suddenly taken place. To my surprise, and not greatly to my satisfaction, his attentions were now turned toward Beatrice. There were the same quiet low-toned words, the same languid, sleepy sort of smile, the same seeking for an opportunity to say something to her in an under tone. All that was wanting of the conduct I remarked toward her sister, was a certain glance of intelligence and meaning, which he did not assume on the present occasion. Two persons present were greatly annoyed; myself, and Narcissa. Her eyes flashed, her lip curled and quivered, and fiery, Italian wrath seemed ready to burst forth at every moment. I concealed my feelings better; but nevertheless, I watched with painful eagerness, determined to call him to a serious account if he gave me any occasion. I had nothing to complain of in the conduct of Beatrice. I could see her shrink from him, and sometimes, a quick, and fiery flush passed over her cheek, sometimes a look of sickening loathing came into her face, which told plainly that he had no hold upon her regard.

When I retired to my room that night, I tried to examine, calmly and deliberately, my own feelings; but calmness and deliberation were not to be had. Beatrice had wound herself into my heart too deeply to be cast out, whatever reason might say. There were objections certainly. She was much younger than myself, an Italian, a Roman Catholic. But she was so beautiful, so graceful; there was such a tenderness, mingled with a sort of sparkling vivacity in her conversation, so many nameless graces, that not to love her seemed impossible.

Her education had been English, too. She had none of the thoughts, none of the feelings, I felt sure, to which we so strongly object in many Italian women, and the only conclusion I could come to, was, to discover, as soon as possible, what progress I had made in her regard. The opportunity presented itself the very next morning. From my window, as I was dressing, I saw her go and seat herself beneath one of the fountains in the farther part of the garden, and I hurried down to obtain a few minutes conversation with her before the rest of the family had risen. She looked up and smiled as I approached, and I seated myself by her side. The beautiful myrtle covered Apennines were sweeping down below us, toward Florence, and rising up toward the sky above, shrouding themselves higher up in their thick chestnut trees. The sky was bright and clear; but the heat of the day had not yet made itself felt, and there was a cool, refreshing morning breeze which took away the languor of an Italian spring day. Her eyes looked brighter than I had ever seen them, and there was a faint, rosy color in her cheek, which added greatly to her beauty. Our conversation was very strange, at least the first part of it. On her part, it consisted altogether of one monosyllable, two or three times repeated. "This is exceedingly beautiful," I said, gazing from her to the landscape. "Could you ever make up your mind to quit these lovely scenes, and dwell in a colder, and less genial land?"

"Yes," she answered.

"And could you there be content and happy, among a people less warm in character, less imbued with taste?"

"Yes," she said, with a sigh, and the color fading away in her cheek.

"And could you go thither with me?" I asked, "and make the whole happiness of one heart that loves you, and brighten one home, where you would reign like one adored?"

"Yes," she answered again; and bent her head till her forehead almost touched her knees.

Then suddenly she started, and, looking up in my face, she added, "But you think not what you do, and I must not let you speak such words, and go on in the same course till you consider well, and determine reasonably." I answered as might be expected, that I had considered, that I had thought what I was doing, and that my happiness depended upon her.

"Then," she answered, "I will never make you unhappy, if it be in woman's power to make you otherwise. But there are many things to be thought of, even before you speak to my father on this subject, and let us think of them, and speak of them calmly. Give me but a moment or two to collect my ideas." She bent down her head upon her hands as she spoke, and there ensued between us a conversation which lasted more than half an hour, which was very grave, and in some degree sad upon her part. Nothing was very clear, nothing was very distinct in it. Twice she mentioned her sister's name, and more than twice we came near the subject which I know was in both our thoughts. But there were feelings of delicacy on both sides which, young as our love was, prevented our speaking our suspicions at that time. That day, however, Mr. Conway rode out again, and as the marquis himself had walked down to a neighboring villa,

he lingered about in the gardens with Narcissa by his side. He seemed to have made his peace with her, and Beatrice kept close to me during the whole time of his stay. They gave us plenty of opportunity to converse at our ease, and then it was that I ventured to make some direct remark to my fair companion, in regard to his strange attentions toward her sister. Beatrice looked timidly round, and then clasping her hands together, she murmured, "He is a villain!" Her face was very pale as she spoke; but the subject being once broached, I went on, saying, "Dear Beatrice; if you know him to be such, why not at once call your father's attention to his conduct?" She remained silent for a moment or two; and then looking sadly up in my face, she answered, "I fear my father owes him money. It is right that you should know it; for although I do not believe that you seek wealth with me, yet perhaps you do not know that I shall have nothing. I am not well informed as to the facts; but of that fact, at least, I am sure. These estates pass away at my father's death to a male relation, and I have heard Mr. Conway speak to him of a bond, and of interest due, and I am sure that instead of having any thing to give or to leave, he is in debt to that odious man."

This intelligence did not take me by surprise; for I had heard from my banker that the Marquis di Spezzia was in any thing but easy circumstances. I was therefore prepared to say, at once, that I never expected any thing with Beatrice but her heart, and that if she could give me that I was satisfied. The thoughts of both, however, reverted speedily to the subject of her sister's conduct, and I asked what she thought was to be done,

endeavoring to point out, as delicately as I could, the dangerous position in which she was placed.

"If your father is precluded from interfering," I asked, "what can be done?" Suddenly she raised her head, with her eye bright, and her color heightened, and answered in a firm, resolute tone, "I will interfere. I wish to yield to my sister in every thing. I have never contested any thing with her; but if I see that she is likely to fall down the precipice on the brink of which she stands, I repeat, I will interfere; and I believe there is a power in the honesty of my purpose that will support me, notwithstanding her pride and fiery temper.

Our conversation proceeded for nearly an hour longer without interruption, and it is hardly possible to tell how greatly Beatrice rose in my esteem during that short time. I had loved her with the fondness of a man for a child; but when reverence mingled with fondness, I felt that it was love indeed. About the end of that time, I chanced to look round, and saw Conway and Narcissa standing under the portico of the villa. Her eyes were bent upon the ground; but his were fixed upon myself and Beatrice, with a look not easily forgotten. However, the marquis returned, and seemed evidently annoyed to find Mr. Conway there; and yet he was exceedingly courteous to him.

On the following day we were to return to Florence, and I resolved to take the first opportunity, after our arrival in the city, to inform him of my love for Beatrice, and to ask her hand; but several days elapsed before that opportunity presented itself, and then, to my great surprise and grief, he decidedly rejected my suit. He was highly honored, he said, and so was his daugh-

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ter; but it could not be. He had the highest esteem and respect for me, but a multitude of considerations prevented his accepting my proposal. I was mortified, and somewhat angry, but still for Beatrice's sake I was about to press for explanations, and endeavor to obviate difficulties, when suddenly, Mr. Conway broke in upon us, with a gay, laughing, jovial air, which he seldom assumed, and which I could evidently see was affected. I could not bear it, and I quitted the house at once, resolving to write what I had to say. I changed my mind, however, before the next morning. Turning all that had occurred in my brain, a suspicion suggested itself that Conway might have something to do with the conduct of the Marquis di Spezzia. I hardly paused to consider his object; to ask myself what could be his designs; but a strong impression took possession of me that he had exercised his power over Beatrice's father, to make him reject one who had remarked his criminal passion for Narcissa, and whom he consequently feared. Love generally becomes more pertinacious from opposition, at least, such was the case with myself, and I determined to make any effort or sacrifice to free Beatrice from the painful situation in which she was placed, and to make her mine. I determined therefore to see the marquis on the following morning, boldly to tell him all I had perceived, and all I suspected, and to offer him any pecuniary assistance which might free him from the trammels into which he had fallen. I went at an hour when I believed I should find him alone; but to my great surprise, I was informed, at the house, that he had gone suddenly with the family to his villa in the country, and I returned mortified and disappointed to the Lung-Arno. I can not de-

scribe the state of my mind during that day. My whole thoughts were confused, my purposes varying, and indefinite. That Beatrice should be mine, that I would frustrate the designs of the man I considered my enemy, that I would overcome every difficulty, and tread obstacles under foot, I determined; but how all this was to be accomplished I could not divine. I laid out a hundred plans, many of which were very wild, and perhaps the wildest of them was, to insult Conway, and to force him either to fight me or to drive him from Florence. I suspected, I know not why, that he was a coward, and I thought that if so, I should speedily succeed in one part of my object, at least. Strange, wrong, and imprudent as this course was, I took some steps in its pursuit. I went back to the Via Ghibbelina about three o'clock, and asked for Mr. Conway; but here again I was met by the same reply. He and his family had gone out of town that morning, to the villa on the Apennines. My resolution was immediately taken. I would go thither on the following morning myself, I thought, and force an explanation.

"A letter, sir, in great haste," said my servant, when I reached my hotel. "The messenger would not wait, but he seemed in great anxiety."

I tore the letter open hastily, and found a few words, signed Beatrice di Spezzia. "Come to us immediately," she said; "if you would save us all. I have spoken boldly to my father, and he has confided in me. He is in the power of a villain, as I thought, and is nearly frantic with the agony of his situation. I have spoken for you, my friend, and have told him there is one who will counsel us well, even if he can not assist us. He

talks of going to you, but it would be better that you should come without a moment's delay. Oh, come, if you love me, as I believe you do."

I ordered horses to the carriage directly, and set out. It was a glorious evening, with the sun setting in purple majesty in the west, and the moon rising over San Miniato in the east, and mingling their light above; but twilight soon succeeded, and darkness came over the earth as I wound up the long hill on the Bolognese road. I had put my pistols into the carriage, and took my servant on the box, thinking that perhaps before I had done, I might need the assistance of both; but alas! neither pistol nor servant could be of any avail.

It was a little before nine o'clock, when at a spot about half a mile below the Tre Maschere, the carriage turned off down the by-road which led to the villa. The distance was not a quarter of a mile; but about three hundred yards from the entrance to that road, my coachman drew a little to the side, and a carriage with post horses passed us at full speed. At the first indication, I put my head to the window, but the travelers went so rapidly that I could not see who they were. It seemed to be an English carriage, however, and I thought, with some satisfaction, that probably the villain had been already driven from the house. I told the man to drive on quick, and in two or three minutes I was at the back entrance of the villa. It was a villa in Palladian style, graceful, and highly decorated without, but rambling, and somewhat inconvenient within. I found no servants in the hall, though there was a light burning, and I went in to the inner vestibule, whence rose a flight of stairs, leading to the chambers above. I heard voices speaking

on the first floor, as I passed the foot of the stairs, and the tones, I know not why, excited some feeling of anxiety. But I went on into the great saloon, and found no one there. There was no one in the little saloon, nor in the dining-room. Turning on my steps, I went back to the stairs, and met an Italian woman servant coming down whom I knew. Her face was covered with tears, and the moment she saw me, she clasped her hands together, with a mute gesture of profound grief, and rushed past me, as if to weep in private. I hesitated no longer, but ran up the stairs, and directed by several voices, entered a room which I believed to be that of Beatrice. There were two or three people in the room —servants, and a man who seemed to be *il medico*— gathered together round a spot on the floor, and I darted forward and pushed them aside. There she lay, beautiful, lovely, even in the deep stillness that had fallen over her. Her face was as pale as ashes, her eyes closed, and all her garments dabbled with blood.

For a moment or two I gazed in horror and despair, and then grasping the arm of the physician, exclaimed, "I charge you, in the presence of all these witnesses, not to let any one quit this house, 'till I bring competent persons to examine into this dreadful transaction."

The man murmured something as to his want of authority; but I shook my finger at him, saying, "Remember, I charge you;" and running back to the carriage, I ordered the coachman to drive to Florence with all speed. How shall I describe my sensations during the journey back? I am afraid almost all my first feelings were those of rage—grief undoubtedly mingling with them; but still with rage predominant. Gradually, how-

ever, anger subsided, and gave way to sorrow—deep, profound, intense. So young, so beautiful, so good, so graceful, to be lost at the very moment she was mine! Oh, it was too terrible, and I wept like a very child. For more than one long hour I gave way to feelings very near akin to despair. I felt then how deeply, how truly I had loved her. I felt that I could willingly have sacrificed my life for hers. But grief was vain. Anger only could be satisfied. Vengeance, I thought I would have vengeance, on whosesoever head it might fall. The desire was so strong, the thirst so intense, that it seemed as if my head were turning with it. During the whole of that day, and the one that preceded it, I had been agitated by violent emotions, and now the climax seemed to have come, and my mind was unable to support the weight. As we drove along, all sorts of strange images presented themselves to my eyes: some dark and terrible, some light and ludicrous; all accompanied with a consciousness that they were not real, that the sight which saw them was not sane. This continued all the way down the lower part of the hill, through the gates, to the police-office. But there I could get no one to attend to me. Though I told the inferior officials all that had occurred—though I urged them to immediate action—they still referred me to to-morrow, and I was obliged to return to my hotel, telling me that their chief would call upon me early.

I passed the night in walking up and down my room. Sleep was of course impossible, with a thousand busy fiends tearing my heart, and setting my brain on fire; but about seven o'clock on the following day, the chief of police made his appearance, and my tale was soon

told. I am afraid it was somewhat incoherent; and seeing that he thought me mad, I said, "You think my brain troubled, signor, and so perhaps it is; for the scene I witnessed last night, the anguish of my mind, and the utter want of sleep and rest during two days, have made me ill; but I am nevertheless quite well enough to accompany you to the villa Spezzia, and there you will find that all I have said is true."

He told me firmly and decidedly, however, that I should not be permitted to accompany him; that he would go immediately, but go alone, and that in the mean time he insisted I should see a physician. Doctor P—— was sent for, even without my consent, and it was evident that he thought me very ill, for he not only wrote a prescription, but waited with me till the draught had been brought from the apothecary's, and saw me take it. It must have contained some strong narcotic, for in a few minutes I fell into a profound sleep, from which I did not wake till evening. I was refreshed and calmed, and though my grief was as deep as ever, I could let my mind rest upon it tranquilly, though painfully. About an hour after I awoke the chief of police returned, and told me the result of his investigations. He told me he had examined all the servants, and every body in the villa, and that there could be no earthly doubt of the young lady having deliberately destroyed herself. At first I replied furiously that it was false; but remembering the impression my incoherence had produced in the morning, and fearing personal restraint, I soon contrived to conceal my feelings, begged his pardon, and saw him depart with pleasure. It was too late to go out to the villa that night, but with cold, bitter determination I re-

solved to see the marquis and his eldest daughter on the following day, and to tell them they had murdered the child and the sister. That she had died by her own hand I would not believe, and I knew well how often the crimes in noble Italian families are vailed by the cautious reports of the police. There was another, too, on whom I resolved to have vengeance: the man who I felt sure had been the cause of all the evil. I would haunt him like an avenging spirit, I thought. I would either bring him to the field, and have life for life, or I would follow him throughout the world, and drive him from society wherever he set his foot. But my first business was with the marquis and his daughter; and I hardened my heart to devise words that might be daggers. My feelings were very strange—such as I had never felt in England. It seemed as if the fierce, unrelenting spirit of old Italy had entered into me, and changed my whole nature.

Sleep I had none that night; and by daylight on the following morning I was ready to depart; but just as I was about to set out, the physician appeared—a mild, tranquil old man, with a good deal of sympathy in his tone—whether the natural breathing of a kindly spirit, or mere professional affectation, I do not know. He would have persuaded me to remain at home, but finding thas I was resolved to go, he told me that he had heard the story of the Spezzia family from the chief of police; that he was much interested in it, and that if I could give him a place in my carriage, he would accompany me. I was glad of a companion and a witness, and I let him go. He tried to talk with me by the way. I could

see that his object was to soothe and calm me; but I was in no mood for conversation, and I remained silent.

The morning was still cool and fresh when we turned off to the right from the Bologna road, with the summit of that fatal villa rising over the olive and fig trees before us. There was a little village church, with its beautiful campanile, some forty yards to the left of the road, about half way down, and I saw some young peasant girls standing round the open porch, and looking in. It instantly struck me that the body lay there, and I resolved to alight, and look upon her beautiful face once more. How the ban of the Roman Catholic church against suicide had been got over I know not, and stop not to inquire. In that land money and intrigue do every thing, and therefore there was no marvel. I made the coachman stop, and got out, while the old physician followed me uninvited. We walked up the path; the young girls gathered round the door, screening the interior from our sight till we had mounted the steps. Then the sound of our footfalls made them move away to the right and left, and what was it I beheld? Two handbiers, covered with mortuary cloths, lay just in the entrance from the great door, with the bodies of the dead upon them, and flowers strewed upon the corpses. Gracious Heaven! I shall never forget it! I darted forward. I stood by the side of the biers, and gazed down; but not on the countenance of Beatrice. There were the fine features, the tall, fair brow, the raven locks of her sister Narcissa. There was the thin, worn, anxious countenance of the Marquis di Spezzia. But no Beatrice was there.

"Good God; what is all this?" I exclaimed, looking

at the priest who stood by Narcissa. He shook his head sadly, and answered not. But the old physician laid his hand upon my arm, saying, "Come away, come away;" and I returned to the carriage, and drove straight to the villa, resolved to wring some information from the servants. I thought I saw it all. I fancied that they had given the honors of the church to the cruel, the hard-hearted, and the vicious, and refused them to the innocent. The door of the villa stood open, as usual, and there were two servants in the hall, but both ran away at once the moment they saw me. I entered, however, and could hear voices speaking; and the next instant there was a step in the vestibule, coming round the foot of the stairs. I thought I knew the sound of the foot-fall, but for an instant I could not see; and I wonder I did not fall down dead with the beating of my heart. The next moment Beatrice herself ran forward, with her hair falling over her shoulders, her eyes stained with weeping, but with her arms stretched out toward me. I caught her in my embrace: I pressed her warmly to my bosom: I murmured my surprise and joy, while she sobbed forth, "Thank God! Thank God! I thought even you had deserted me."

Holding her still in my arms, I carried her toward the saloon, where I had seen her lying two days before; but she whispered, "Not there! not there!" and I bore her into the lesser room. But it was long, very long, before I could obtain from her any distinct account of what had happened.

It was all in detached fragments, even when I did hear it; but I found, at length, that the same sight which had deceived me, had, probably, deceived others. It

would seem that Narcissa had discovered the fact of Beatrice having sent a messenger to me, and either guessed, or found out the contents of her note. She sought her out in the saloon, and assailed her with fierce and angry language. From her sister's answers she learned that her own criminal intercourse with Conway was discovered, and her father coming in at the moment, a scene ensued which must have been terrible, but the particulars of which I never learned. She boldly avowed her guilt, however, and the frightful position in which she had placed herself.

Excited almost to phrensy, the marquis sought out Conway, and drove him from the house, daring him to do his worst, and receiving back bitter taunts and threats in return. He did not return to the saloon, and for some quarter of an hour, her sister having left her also, Beatrice remained alone, exhausted and almost overpowered by the scene that had just passed. At length, however, her sister came back, with a knife in her hand, and the poor girl knew not whether her purpose was murder or suicide. Few words passed; for Beatrice sprang up, shrieking for help, and attempted to wrest the knife from her sister's grasp. Her efforts were in vain, however. Narcissa was taller, stronger, endued with the strength of phrensy, and holding her sister back with her left hand, she plunged the knife into her own bosom, exclaiming bitterly, "There! see what you have done! now you are satisfied!" The struggle, the horror, and the anguish were more than the delicate frame of Beatrice could bear, and she fell upon the floor in a death-like fainting-fit, after which she remembered nothing for nearly an hour. Perhaps some remains of sisterly

affection—perhaps mere habitual impulse—induced Narcissa to try to catch her sister as she fell, or to raise her when she had fallen; but, certain it is, that she was found by the servants lying across the inanimate form of poor Beatrice, with the fatal knife still in her hand. She was yet living when they discovered her, and bore her to her chamber; but she only survived a few minutes.

When or how the marquis had died no one knew. He was fouud in his own chamber, seated in his arm-chair, and quite dead. There was no wound or mark of violence upon his body. An empty vial was found in the room, but without any proof that it had ever contained poison, though I had very little doubt that such had been the case. Such was the dark and terrible tragedy at the Villa Spezzia, of which you may hear the neighboring peasantry tell the tale, terribly magnified and distorted. There were many painful things to be done, and various difficulties to be overcome; but the good old medico who had accompanied me from Florence was of infinite service both to me and Beatrice. He soothed and calmed her even better than I could do; for he had more experience of the heart of man and woman, and he brought his medical skill, too, to bear, drawing forth a large pocket-case full of vials, and administering what he knew would tranquillize the dear, unhappy girl. He went, too, to the chief magistrate of the place, to make many arrangements that were necessary, and when he returned, he offered kindly to take the poor girl to his own house, and place her under the care of his wife. No better plan could be devised, and, in the evening, we quitted that dark and melancholy place, and made our way back to Florence. Early on

the following day I flew to Beatrice again; but the fatal experience of the last few days had shaken her confidence in all mankind, and she seemed to doubt even my intentions toward her. Those doubts were soon removed, however; for my very first task was to represent to her that, left alone in the world, as she now was, she must endeavor to overcome her grief so far as to become my wife immediately. Her only answer was, as she clung round my neck, "Oh, take me away from this dreadful land as soon as may be."

For a few days, several distant relations visited her frequently, and seemed inclined to interfere; but when they found that all the property left by the marquis, except that which went to a male relation, would not suffice to pay his debts, their visits fell away, and Beatrice was left entirely to her own discretion. At that time great difficulties existed in Italy in regard to the marriage of a Roman Catholic to a Protestant, and the only means of solving them rapidly was to induce the old physician and his wife to cross the Alps with me into France, bringing Beatrice along with them. This was easily accomplished by means that are generally all-powerful with Italians, and, two months after her father's and her sister's death, Beatrice became mine. She remained with me for three happy years, and left me the dear boy you have seen. But her health had received a shock at the Villa Spezzia from which it never recovered, and she died calmly in the end of last May. Her fate was a sad one; but she showed no immoderate grief at the approach of an early death, no eager clinging to life, no anxious terror at the view of the world to come. In-

most became domesticated in the family. Every day some expedition was proposed, something to be done, something to be seen, and the time glided away very pleasantly and very swiftly. My new friend had an excellent knowledge and appreciation of art, and took care that I should see all the marvels of the pencil or the chisel which the city of Florence contains, nor were any objects of interest in the neighborhood omitted, nor any historical monuments. But as I am not writing a guide-book, I must omit all details, dwelling merely upon that which affected me as a man, rather than as a man of taste. Often, when we went forth for a stroll through the city, or passed the morning at the Petti, or in the great gallery, we were accompanied by Beatrice, though her stately sister generally thought fit to remain at home on these occasions. When we made any more distant expeditions, however, sometimes spending one or two more days out of Florence, Signora Narcissa always accompanied us, evidently greatly against her will, and she was not a personage at all to conceal her distaste for any thing that did not please her. She contrived to diminish our enjoyment very greatly; sometimes by petulant sallies, which I wondered that her father bore with patience; sometimes by a cold, sauntering sort of indifference, still more provoking.

I had hardly been in Florence a fortnight, however, before I began to gain some insight into the cause of her conduct. At first, it came as a mere suspicion, very painful; but not definite. Mr. Conway was frequently of our parties: Mistress Conway rarely; and I remarked two things which soon led me right to distressing conclusions. Our English acquaintance never in the pre-

sence of her father paid any very marked attention to the beautiful Narcissa; but when the Marquis himself was absent, even for a moment, he was sure to be at her side, with his soft, and somewhat sleepy manner, and low-toned musical voice. At other times, an occasional low-spoken word, a glance of quick intelligence, or a look of tender meaning were the only signs of concealed intimacy between them. This was what first roused doubts in my mind. The second thing, was, that whenever Conway was of the party, the young lady was perfectly gay and cheerful. Combining these facts with the glimpse I had obtained of them in the gallery on my first visit, I could not help believing that there was a better understanding between them than was consistent with her safety, and his position. I was still, as it were, a stranger, although intimacy had rapidly grown up between myself and the Marquis of Spezzia. It was the friendship of feeling, but not of years; and such affections of the mind are like things formed in clay, or cast in iron, and they require time to cool and harden them. I liked him much. Thin, and pale, and anxious looking as he was, there was something exceedingly prepossessing in his countenance. His conduct through life had been irreproachable, and he had too many enthusiasms to be a very accomplished hypocrite. Sentiments spoken, or written, often deceive us; for where there is deliberation there is art; but where sentiments are accidentally discovered, or instincts suddenly betrayed, there is less chance of a keen observer being deceived. Still, the date of our frienship was very late, and I did not feel myself justified in calling the father's notice to the danger of his daughter, feeling the difficulty increased per-

haps by a belief that he might have averted the peril. The standard of morality is not very high in Italy, it is true, and we find few in that land who can even conceive its being placed so high as in England; but yet, many a chance word, and casual observation showed that my Italian friend deeply regretted the very general depravity of morals which prevailed in his own country. Still, I hesitated—still, I thought I might be mistaken—still, I considered delicacy and prudence; perhaps more than justice and right. Let me confess the whole truth, however, while I am telling this dark tale. The beauty and the grace, the gentleness and the frankness of Beatrice di Spezzia had produced upon me an impression not easily to be shaken off; and, not knowing what might be the result if I ventured to call her father's attention to her sister's conduct toward Mr. Conway, my hesitation was increased by consideration for her. I must not say that I was actually in love with her. She was a great deal younger than I was—some ten or twelve years at least—and I was still in that stage of passion wherein the dreams of Plato become tangible realities, and we fancy that something deeper, though colder than love, can exist between two persons of different sexes, even in the early spring of life.

A little incident may have had some share in determining my conduct. The Marquis had a villa on the slope of the Apennines, a little below the small hotel of Three Masks, and not very far distant from the village of Gherini. The summer was coming on. The family were soon about to remove thither from Florence, and we all went out for a few days in the fine spring time, ot see arrangements made, and order some repairs. The

house was not in the best order; but the weather was summer-like and serene, and the greater part of our time was passed out of doors. Our party consisted of the Marquis, his two daughters and myself, and Mr. Conway and his wife had not been invited. Monsieur di Spezzia had a notion of laying out a garden near the villa in the English style; but I easily showed a man of his real taste that, when done, it would not harmonize at all with the character of the building and the scene, and he applied himself to finish and restore a handsome but formal Italian garden, laid out by some former proprietor. He was thus occupied a great part of each day. Narcissa was in one of her dull, and solitary moods, and remained all the morning in her own chamber. Beatrice went out with me—not to any distance from the house, but to a little spot just below the plain of the garden, where we were within some eighty or a hundred yards of the spot where her father sat, superintending the labors of his workmen. I had taken a book of English poems, to beguile any dull moments pleasantly, and it was very pleasant and sweet to hear that beautiful girl syllable the lines of English verse, with a strong Italian accent, but a full appreciation of the words. It was a very difficult thing in such a scene, and such a moment to avoid what is called falling in love, and, indeed, I did not try it very much; for I was my own master, and there was no law against my picking up a gem wherever I might find one. I had done reading a passage, and dropped the book upon my knee, to dwell upon the thoughts which the poet suggested. Beatrice was sitting a little farther down, with her head leaning back against the bank, and her beautiful small feet cros-

sed over each other, when, suddenly, I saw something move slowly through the low myrtles which carpeted that part of the ground, and a moment after, a snake of that species called the black viper—the most venomous in Italy—raised its head, close by her feet, as if surprised and irritated by the obstacle in its way, and about to bite her. I rose instantly, took one step forward, and at the second, set the heel of my boot upon the reptile's head.

"What is the matter?" she cried, seeing me press my foot hard into the sand.

"Only a viper," I answered; and then, without meaning any particular allusion, I added, "I really know not whether it was most rash or reasonable to try to kill him thus at your very feet, where, if I had missed my tread, he might have stung you."

"Oh, right, right," she exclaimed, eagerly; but then she rose, and clasped her hands together, saying, after a pause, "It is always right to set your foot upon a serpent's head—doubtless, you have saved my life."

She spoke very slowly, and earnestly; but the next moment, she resumed an easier, if not a lighter tone, explained to me that the creature she saw lying there was exceedingly poisonous, and that she had often known domestic animals, and even young children die from the bite; but all her commonplaces could not obliterate from my mind the earnestness with which she had said "It is always right to set your foot upon a serpent's head." I fancied I could hardly doubt that those words had some latent meaning, and the suddenness with which she changed her tone, only served to confirm the impression.

I resolved to watch more closely than ever, and I thought to have an opportunity that very day; for Mr.

Conway rode out, just to see how his friend the marquis was going on, he said. But a great change had suddenly taken place. To my surprise, and not greatly to my satisfaction, his attentions were now turned toward Beatrice. There were the same quiet low-toned words, the same languid, sleepy sort of smile, the same seeking for an opportunity to say something to her in an under tone. All that was wanting of the conduct I remarked toward her sister, was a certain glance of intelligence and meaning, which he did not assume on the present occasion. Two persons present were greatly annoyed; myself, and Narcissa. Her eyes flashed, her lip curled and quivered, and fiery, Italian wrath seemed ready to burst forth at every moment. I concealed my feelings better; but nevertheless, I watched with painful eagerness, determined to call him to a serious account if he gave me any occasion. I had nothing to complain of in the conduct of Beatrice. I could see her shrink from him, and sometimes, a quick, and fiery flush passed over her cheek, sometimes a look of sickening loathing came into her face, which told plainly that he had no hold upon her regard.

When I retired to my room that night, I tried to examine, calmly and deliberately, my own feelings; but calmness and deliberation were not to be had. Beatrice had wound herself into my heart too deeply to be cast out, whatever reason might say. There were objections certainly. She was much younger than myself, an Italian, a Roman Catholic. But she was so beautiful, so graceful; there was such a tenderness, mingled with a sort of sparkling vivacity in her conversation, so many nameless graces, that not to love her seemed impossible.

Her education had been English, too. She had none of the thoughts, none of the feelings, I felt sure, to which we so strongly object in many Italian women, and the only conclusion I could come to, was, to discover, as soon as possible, what progress I had made in her regard. The opportunity presented itself the very next morning. From my window, as I was dressing, I saw her go and seat herself beneath one of the fountains in the farther part of the garden, and I hurried down to obtain a few minutes conversation with her before the rest of the family had risen. She looked up and smiled as I approached, and I seated myself by her side. The beautiful myrtle covered Apennines were sweeping down below us, toward Florence, and rising up toward the sky above, shrouding themselves higher up in their thick chestnut trees. The sky was bright and clear; but the heat of the day had not yet made itself felt, and there was a cool, refreshing morning breeze which took away the languor of an Italian spring day. Her eyes looked brighter than I had ever seen them, and there was a faint, rosy color in her cheek, which added greatly to her beauty. Our conversation was very strange, at least the first part of it. On her part, it consisted altogether of one monosyllable, two or three times repeated. "This is exceedingly beautiful," I said, gazing from her to the landscape. "Could you ever make up your mind to quit these lovely scenes, and dwell in a colder, and less genial land?"

"Yes," she answered.

"And could you there be content and happy, among a people less warm in character, less imbued with taste?"

"Yes," she said, with a sigh, and the color fading away in her cheek.

"And could you go thither with me?" I asked, "and make the whole happiness of one heart that loves you, and brighten one home, where you would reign like one adored?"

"Yes," she answered again; and bent her head till her forehead almost touched her knees.

Then suddenly she started, and, looking up in my face, she added, "But you think not what you do, and I must not let you speak such words, and go on in the same course till you consider well, and determine reasonably." I answered as might be expected, that I had considered, that I had thought what I was doing, and that my happiness depended upon her.

"Then," she answered, "I will never make you unhappy, if it be in woman's power to make you otherwise. But there are many things to be thought of, even before you speak to my father on this subject, and let us think of them, and speak of them calmly. Give me but a moment or two to collect my ideas." She bent down her head upon her hands as she spoke, and there ensued between us a conversation which lasted more than half an hour, which was very grave, and in some degree sad upon her part. Nothing was very clear, nothing was very distinct in it. Twice she mentioned her sister's name, and more than twice we came near the subject which I know was in both our thoughts. But there were feelings of delicacy on both sides which, young as our love was, prevented our speaking our suspicions at that time. That day, however, Mr. Conway rode out again, and as the marquis himself had walked down to a neighboring villa,

he lingered about in the gardens with Narcissa by his side. He seemed to have made his peace with her, and Beatrice kept close to me during the whole time of his stay. They gave us plenty of opportunity to converse at our ease, and then it was that I ventured to make some direct remark to my fair companion, in regard to his strange attentions toward her sister. Beatrice looked timidly round, and then clasping her hands together, she murmured, "He is a villain!" Her face was very pale as she spoke; but the subject being once broached, I went on, saying, "Dear Beatrice; if you know him to be such, why not at once call your father's attention to his conduct?" She remained silent for a moment or two; and then looking sadly up in my face, she answered, "I fear my father owes him money. It is right that you should know it; for although I do not believe that you seek wealth with me, yet perhaps you do not know that I shall have nothing. I am not well informed as to the facts; but of that fact, at least, I am sure. These estates pass away at my father's death to a male relation, and I have heard Mr. Conway speak to him of a bond, and of interest due, and I am sure that instead of having any thing to give or to leave, he is in debt to that odious man."

This intelligence did not take me by surprise; for I had heard from my banker that the Marquis di Spezzia was in any thing but easy circumstances. I was therefore prepared to say, at once, that I never expected any thing with Beatrice but her heart, and that if she could give me that I was satisfied. The thoughts of both, however, reverted speedily to the subject of her sister's conduct, and I asked what she thought was to be done,

endeavoring to point out, as delicately as I could, the dangerous position in which she was placed.

"If your father is precluded from interfering," I asked, "what can be done?" Suddenly she raised her head, with her eye bright, and her color heightened, and answered in a firm, resolute tone, "I will interfere. I wish to yield to my sister in every thing. I have never contested any thing with her; but if I see that she is likely to fall down the precipice on the brink of which she stands, I repeat, I will interfere; and I believe there is a power in the honesty of my purpose that will support me, notwithstanding her pride and fiery temper.

Our conversation proceeded for nearly an hour longer without interruption, and it is hardly possible to tell how greatly Beatrice rose in my esteem during that short time. I had loved her with the fondness of a man for a child; but when reverence mingled with fondness, I felt that it was love indeed. About the end of that time, I chanced to look round, and saw Conway and Narcissa standing under the portico of the villa. Her eyes were bent upon the ground; but his were fixed upon myself and Beatrice, with a look not easily forgotten. However, the marquis returned, and seemed evidently annoyed to find Mr. Conway there; and yet he was exceedingly courteous to him.

On the following day we were to return to Florence, and I resolved to take the first opportunity, after our arrival in the city, to inform him of my love for Beatrice, and to ask her hand; but several days elapsed before that opportunity presented itself, and then, to my great surprise and grief, he decidedly rejected my suit. He was highly honored, he said, and so was his daugh-

ter; but it could not be. He had the highest esteem and respect for me, but a multitude of considerations prevented his accepting my proposal. I was mortified, and somewhat angry, but still for Beatrice's sake I was about to press for explanations, and endeavor to obviate difficulties, when suddenly, Mr. Conway broke in upon us, with a gay, laughing, jovial air, which he seldom assumed, and which I could evidently see was affected. I could not bear it, and I quitted the house at once, resolving to write what I had to say. I changed my mind, however, before the next morning. Turning all that had occurred in my brain, a suspicion suggested itself that Conway might have something to do with the conduct of the Marquis di Spezzia. I hardly paused to consider his object; to ask myself what could be his designs; but a strong impression took possession of me that he had exercised his power over Beatrice's father, to make him reject one who had remarked his criminal passion for Narcissa, and whom he consequently feared. Love generally becomes more pertinacious from opposition, at least, such was the case with myself, and I determined to make any effort or sacrifice to free Beatrice from the painful situation in which she was placed, and to make her mine. I determined therefore to see the marquis on the following morning, boldly to tell him all I had perceived, and all I suspected, and to offer him any pecuniary assistance which might free him from the trammels into which he had fallen. I went at an hour when I believed I should find him alone; but to my great surprise, I was informed, at the house, that he had gone suddenly with the family to his villa in the country, and I returned mortified and disappointed to the Lung-Arno. I can not de-

scribe the state of my mind during that day. My whole thoughts were confused, my purposes varying, and indefinite. That Beatrice should be mine, that I would frustrate the designs of the man I considered my enemy, that I would overcome every difficulty, and tread obstacles under foot, I determined; but how all this was to be accomplished I could not divine. I laid out a hundred plans, many of which were very wild, and perhaps the wildest of them was, to insult Conway, and to force him either to fight me or to drive him from Florence. I suspected, I know not why, that he was a coward, and I thought that if so, I should speedily succeed in one part of my object, at least. Strange, wrong, and imprudent as this course was, I took some steps in its pursuit. I went back to the Via Ghibbelina about three o'clock, and asked for Mr. Conway; but here again I was met by the same reply. He and his family had gone out of town that morning, to the villa on the Apennines. My resolution was immediately taken. I would go thither on the following morning myself, I thought, and force an explanation.

"A letter, sir, in great haste," said my servant, when I reached my hotel. "The messenger would not wait, but he seemed in great anxiety."

I tore the letter open hastily, and found a few words, signed Beatrice di Spezzia. "Come to us immediately," she said; "if you would save us all. I have spoken boldly to my father, and he has confided in me. He is in the power of a villain, as I thought, and is nearly frantic with the agony of his situation. I have spoken for you, my friend, and have told him there is one who will counsel us well, even if he can not assist us. He

talks of going to you, but it would be better that you should come without a moment's delay. Oh, come, if you love me, as I believe you do."

I ordered horses to the carriage directly, and set out. It was a glorious evening, with the sun setting in purple majesty in the west, and the moon rising over San Miniato in the east, and mingling their light above; but twilight soon succeeded, and darkness came over the earth as I wound up the long hill on the Bolognese road. I had put my pistols into the carriage, and took my servant on the box, thinking that perhaps before I had done, I might need the assistance of both; but alas! neither pistol nor servant could be of any avail.

It was a little before nine o'clock, when at a spot about half a mile below the Tre Maschere, the carriage turned off down the by-road which led to the villa. The distance was not a quarter of a mile; but about three hundred yards from the entrance to that road, my coachman drew a little to the side, and a carriage with post horses passed us at full speed. At the first indication, I put my head to the window, but the travelers went so rapidly that I could not see who they were. It seemed to be an English carriage, however, and I thought, with some satisfaction, that probably the villain had been already driven from the house. I told the man to drive on quick, and in two or three minutes I was at the back entrance of the villa. It was a villa in Palladian style, graceful, and highly decorated without, but rambling, and somewhat inconvenient within. I found no servants in the hall, though there was a light burning, and I went in to the inner vestibule, whence rose a flight of stairs, leading to the chambers above. I heard voices speaking

on the first floor, as I passed the foot of the stairs, and the tones, I know not why, excited some feeling of anxiety. But I went on into the great saloon, and found no one there. There was no one in the little saloon, nor in the dining-room. Turning on my steps, I went back to the stairs, and met an Italian woman servant coming down whom I knew. Her face was covered with tears, and the moment she saw me, she clasped her hands together, with a mute gesture of profound grief, and rushed past me, as if to weep in private. I hesitated no longer, but ran up the stairs, and directed by several voices, entered a room which I believed to be that of Beatrice. There were two or three people in the room —servants, and a man who seemed to be *il medico*— gathered together round a spot on the floor, and I darted forward and pushed them aside. There she lay, beautiful, lovely, even in the deep stillness that had fallen over her. Her face was as pale as ashes, her eyes closed, and all her garments dabbled with blood.

For a moment or two I gazed in horror and despair, and then grasping the arm of the physician, exclaimed, "I charge you, in the presence of all these witnesses, not to let any one quit this house, 'till I bring competent persons to examine into this dreadful transaction."

The man murmured something as to his want of authority; but I shook my finger at him, saying, "Remember, I charge you;" and running back to the carriage, I ordered the coachman to drive to Florence with all speed. How shall I describe my sensations during the journey back? I am afraid almost all my first feelings were those of rage—grief undoubtedly mingling with them; but still with rage predominant. Gradually, how-

THE ITALIAN SISTERS.

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On the twenty-fourth of April, 1820, I received a visit in my chambers from my cousin William, whom I had not seen or heard of for eight years. He wished me to arrange his affairs for him, and I went to spend a few days for that purpose at his house in ——shire, where the necessity of some explanations induced him to relate his own history.

I was traveling in Italy in the year —, and had letters of introduction to several good families in different parts of the country. Among the rest was one to the Marquis of Spezzia, who had at one time lived about three years in England, as minister from the Court of Florence. On his return he had gone to Milan, where I had expected to find him; but on inquiring for him in that city, I found that he had since inherited some property in Tuscany, and was living in the Via Ghibbelina, in Florence. On my arrival in the capital of Tuscany, I went to an hotel on the Lung-Arno, and in the even-

ing proceeded to deliver my letters. The Palazzo Spezzia was a very handsome building, surrounding a quadrangle. In fact, all that side of the street is built in the same manner, with houses fit for princes, and very often beggars living in them. The marquis, indeed, was not reputed so poor as many of the Italian nobility; but yet not rich enough to occupy the whole of so large a building. He consequently reserved to himself the first floor (the second as they call it there), and let the rest of his house to an English family, more noble by name than by nature.

To make my tale clear, I may as well say, that this family consisted of a younger brother of Lord Conway, as I shall call him (though that was not his real name), his wife, and two or three young children. The whole of the Conway family had made themselves somewhat notorious for looseness of morals; but I never heard this gentleman particularly ill spoken of, and his wife, though apparently caring very little about her husband's conduct, was without reproach in regard to her own. He was a man of thirty-three or thirty-four at this time, tolerably well looking, though not remarkably so, but with a sleepy blue eye, and quiet, insinuating manner, which I have often remarked in men more successful than scrupulous in the pursuit of pleasure. I had met him once or twice in London, and always looked upon him as the best of his family.

But let me return to my tale. On mounting the stairs from the great entrance, under what they would call the *porte cochère* in France, I found a pair of enormous doors, with a bell-handle hanging from a long thick wire, and, on my ringing, one valve of these doors was opened

by a black-looking Italian servant, who admitted me into a great hall, round the top of which ran a gallery, ornamented with twelve very well executed marble statues, and serving as a communication from one side of the house to the other, without passing the entrance staircase, which might be considered as almost a part of the street. In this large hall, almost big enough to contain a modern house, I was left by the servant, while he went past to ask if his master would receive me; and the blinds being all shut, with but a faint light without, there was something ghastly and sinister in the aspect of the place, with the white statues gleaming like ghosts above, that marked my first steps into the Palazzo Spezzia with a feeling akin to awe. I stood still, with my arms folded on my breast, gazing round me; but I had hardly been there a minute, when I heard steps apparently approaching, and I fancied it was the servant returning, but no door opened.

Soon a sound of murmuring voices succeeded—voices apparently in low and earnest conversation—and the eye, guided by the ear, turned toward the gallery, where, in the spectre-like gloom, I saw two figures slowly pass along from the one side of the house to the other. They were those of a man and a woman; but no feature could I distinguish, and even the outline of the form of each was faint and indistinct. They were in very lover-like proximity, however, and I could see that the lady, whoever she was, must be tall and commanding in person, while the man, who seemed to have his arm around her waist, was hardly, if at all, above the middle height. The murmured words only reached my ear as vague and indefinite sounds; but still, the two speakers did not

apparently know that any one was there below; for they paused for a few moments in the middle of the gallery, and were only scared away, I believe, by the sudden appearance of a light.

This time it was the servant who appeared; but he came lighting in the marquis himself, who welcomed me with great hospitality, and a warmth of manner not usual in the Italian nobility. He had been under great obligations, he said, to the friend who introduced me, and he was delighted to have an opportunity, if not to return his kindness, to show his sense of it in some degree. He led me into his own little library, or study, where I found he had surrounded himself with objects of *vertù*—which are equal to Paradise in the eyes of an Italian—and after sitting and chatting for some time over old scenes and remembrances, he begged the pleasure of introducing me to his daughters. In the saloon to which he led me, we found but one young lady present, a dark-eyed, beautiful girl, of perhaps nineteen, very delicately formed, and small in all her proportions. The marquis asked where her sister was, and she replied, somewhat languidly, she did not know; but being introduced, and seated by her on the sofa, I soon contrived to rouse her from her sort of apathetic mood. She spoke English almost as her native language, and my Italian being villainously bad, the conversation was speedily carried on in no other tongue than my own. I never met with any other Italian but herself who had a real heartfelt fondness for England. Its often weeping skies themselves she loved, and described how delighted she would be sometimes to drive out in a spring shower, when the drops were mingled with sunshine, and the

whole earth put on a joyful freshness of aspect, which it rarely, if ever, knows in Italy. She had, in short, become completely imbued with the spirit of English rural life, which requires early initiation and long habit, I believe, for its full appreciation. Sympathies were speedily awakened, and, while I did full justice to her own beautiful country, I was very much charmed with the rarity of finding a foreigner do justice to mine.

Her father mingled in the conversation, but, I thought with some constraint. Something seemed to embarras and preoccupy him; but at length the door opened, and a tall, marvelously handsome girl entered, perhaps two or three years older than the other. Her whole countenance was queenlike and majestic, notwithstanding a somewhat flushed and agitated look, and her figure was remarkably fine. But I could not help thinking that there was a remarkable resemblance between that figure and one of the two phantoms which had passed along the gallery of the hall.

This was the eldest daughter of the marquis, and she received me with a distant stateliness which soon made me fall back upon the conversation of her sister. The elder did not seem to be at all displeased at being left to her own thoughts, and I remained more than an hour in very agreeable conversation with Signora Beatrice and her father, while the other labored through a small portion of some lady's ornamental work, seeming to exert herself very diligently, and yet make small progress. I then took my leave; but the marquis came to call upon me on the following day, bearing with him an invitation to dinner, and did all he could to show kind and hospitable attention to a stranger. In short, I al-

most became domesticated in the family. Every day some expedition was proposed, something to be done, something to be seen, and the time glided away very pleasantly and very swiftly. My new friend had an excellent knowledge and appreciation of art, and took care that I should see all the marvels of the pencil or the chisel which the city of Florence contains, nor were any objects of interest in the neighborhood omitted, nor any historical monuments. But as I am not writing a guide-book, I must omit all details, dwelling merely upon that which affected me as a man, rather than as a man of taste. Often, when we went forth for a stroll through the city, or passed the morning at the Petti, or in the great gallery, we were accompanied by Beatrice, though her stately sister generally thought fit to remain at home on these occasions. When we made any more distant expeditions, however, sometimes spending one or two more days out of Florence, Signora Narcissa always accompanied us, evidently greatly against her will, and she was not a personage at all to conceal her distaste for any thing that did not please her. She contrived to diminish our enjoyment very greatly; sometimes by petulant sallies, which I wondered that her father bore with patience; sometimes by a cold, sauntering sort of indifference, still more provoking.

I had hardly been in Florence a fortnight, however, before I began to gain some insight into the cause of her conduct. At first, it came as a mere suspicion, very painful; but not definite. Mr. Conway was frequently of our parties: Mistress Conway rarely; and I remarked two things which soon led me right to distressing conclusions. Our English acquaintance never in the pre-

sence of her father paid any very marked attention to the beautiful Narcissa; but when the Marquis himself was absent, even for a moment, he was sure to be at her side, with his soft, and somewhat sleepy manner, and low-toned musical voice. At other times, an occasional low-spoken word, a glance of quick intelligence, or a look of tender meaning were the only signs of concealed intimacy between them. This was what first roused doubts in my mind. The second thing, was, that whenever Conway was of the party, the young lady was perfectly gay and cheerful. Combining these facts with the glimpse I had obtained of them in the gallery on my first visit, I could not help believing that there was a better understanding between them than was consistent with her safety, and his position. I was still, as it were, a stranger, although intimacy had rapidly grown up between myself and the Marquis of Spezzia. It was the friendship of feeling, but not of years; and such affections of the mind are like things formed in clay, or cast in iron, and they require time to cool and harden them. I liked him much. Thin, and pale, and anxious looking as he was, there was something exceedingly prepossessing in his countenance. His conduct through life had been irreproachable, and he had too many enthusiasms to be a very accomplished hypocrite. Sentiments spoken, or written, often deceive us; for where there is deliberation there is art; but where sentiments are accidentally discovered, or instincts suddenly betrayed, there is less chance of a keen observer being deceived. Still, the date of our frienship was very late, and I did not feel myself justified in calling the father's notice to the danger of his daughter, feeling the difficulty increased per-

haps by a belief that he might have averted the peril. The standard of morality is not very high in Italy, it is true, and we find few in that land who can even conceive its being placed so high as in England; but yet, many a chance word, and casual observation showed that my Italian friend deeply regretted the very general depravity of morals which prevailed in his own country. Still, I hesitated—still, I thought I might be mistaken—still, I considered delicacy and prudence; perhaps more than justice and right. Let me confess the whole truth, however, while I am telling this dark tale. The beauty and the grace, the gentleness and the frankness of Beatrice di Spezzia had produced upon me an impression not easily to be shaken off; and, not knowing what might be the result if I ventured to call her father's attention to her sister's conduct toward Mr. Conway, my hesitation was increased by consideration for her. I must not say that I was actually in love with her. She was a great deal younger than I was—some ten or twelve years at least—and I was still in that stage of passion wherein the dreams of Plato become tangible realities, and we fancy that something deeper, though colder than love, can exist between two persons of different sexes, even in the early spring of life.

A little incident may have had some share in determining my conduct. The Marquis had a villa on the slope of the Apennines, a little below the small hotel of Three Masks, and not very far distant from the village of Gherini. The summer was coming on. The family were soon about to remove thither from Florence, and we all went out for a few days in the fine spring time, ot see arrangements made, and order some repairs. The

house was not in the best order; but the weather was summer-like and serene, and the greater part of our time was passed out of doors. Our party consisted of the Marquis, his two daughters and myself, and Mr. Conway and his wife had not been invited. Monsieur di Spezzia had a notion of laying out a garden near the villa in the English style; but I easily showed a man of his real taste that, when done, it would not harmonize at all with the character of the building and the scene, and he applied himself to finish and restore a handsome but formal Italian garden, laid out by some former proprietor. He was thus occupied a great part of each day. Narcissa was in one of her dull, and solitary moods, and remained all the morning in her own chamber. Beatrice went out with me—not to any distance from the house, but to a little spot just below the plain of the garden, where we were within some eighty or a hundred yards of the spot where her father sat, superintending the labors of his workmen. I had taken a book of English poems, to beguile any dull moments pleasantly, and it was very pleasant and sweet to hear that beautiful girl syllable the lines of English verse, with a strong Italian accent, but a full appreciation of the words. It was a very difficult thing in such a scene, and such a moment to avoid what is called falling in love, and, indeed, I did not try it very much; for I was my own master, and there was no law against my picking up a gem wherever I might find one. I had done reading a passage, and dropped the book upon my knee, to dwell upon the thoughts which the poet suggested. Beatrice was sitting a little farther down, with her head leaning back against the bank, and her beautiful small feet cros-

sed over each other, when, suddenly, I saw something move slowly through the low myrtles which carpeted that part of the ground, and a moment after, a snake of that species called the black viper—the most venomous in Italy—raised its head, close by her feet, as if surprised and irritated by the obstacle in its way, and about to bite her. I rose instantly, took one step forward, and at the second, set the heel of my boot upon the reptile's head.

"What is the matter?" she cried, seeing me press my foot hard into the sand.

"Only a viper," I answered; and then, without meaning any particular allusion, I added, "I really know not whether it was most rash or reasonable to try to kill him thus at your very feet, where, if I had missed my tread, he might have stung you."

"Oh, right, right," she exclaimed, eagerly; but then she rose, and clasped her hands together, saying, after a pause, "It is always right to set your foot upon a serpent's head—doubtless, you have saved my life."

She spoke very slowly, and earnestly; but the next moment, she resumed an easier, if not a lighter tone, explained to me that the creature she saw lying there was exceedingly poisonous, and that she had often known domestic animals, and even young children die from the bite; but all her commonplaces could not obliterate from my mind the earnestness with which she had said "It is always right to set your foot upon a serpent's head." I fancied I could hardly doubt that those words had some latent meaning, and the suddenness with which she changed her tone, only served to confirm the impression.

I resolved to watch more closely than ever, and I thought to have an opportunity that very day; for Mr.

Conway rode out, just to see how his friend the marquis was going on, he said. But a great change had suddenly taken place. To my surprise, and not greatly to my satisfaction, his attentions were now turned toward Beatrice. There were the same quiet low-toned words, the same languid, sleepy sort of smile, the same seeking for an opportunity to say something to her in an under tone. All that was wanting of the conduct I remarked toward her sister, was a certain glance of intelligence and meaning, which he did not assume on the present occasion. Two persons present were greatly annoyed; myself, and Narcissa. Her eyes flashed, her lip curled and quivered, and fiery, Italian wrath seemed ready to burst forth at every moment. I concealed my feelings better; but nevertheless, I watched with painful eagerness, determined to call him to a serious account if he gave me any occasion. I had nothing to complain of in the conduct of Beatrice. I could see her shrink from him, and sometimes, a quick, and fiery flush passed over her cheek, sometimes a look of sickening loathing came into her face, which told plainly that he had no hold upon her regard.

When I retired to my room that night, I tried to examine, calmly and deliberately, my own feelings; but calmness and deliberation were not to be had. Beatrice had wound herself into my heart too deeply to be cast out, whatever reason might say. There were objections certainly. She was much younger than myself, an Italian, a Roman Catholic. But she was so beautiful, so graceful; there was such a tenderness, mingled with a sort of sparkling vivacity in her conversation, so many nameless graces, that not to love her seemed impossible.

Her education had been English, too. She had none of the thoughts, none of the feelings, I felt sure, to which we so strongly object in many Italian women, and the only conclusion I could come to, was, to discover, as soon as possible, what progress I had made in her regard. The opportunity presented itself the very next morning. From my window, as I was dressing, I saw her go and seat herself beneath one of the fountains in the farther part of the garden, and I hurried down to obtain a few minutes conversation with her before the rest of the family had risen. She looked up and smiled as I approached, and I seated myself by her side. The beautiful myrtle covered Apennines were sweeping down below us, toward Florence, and rising up toward the sky above, shrouding themselves higher up in their thick chestnut trees. The sky was bright and clear; but the heat of the day had not yet made itself felt, and there was a cool, refreshing morning breeze which took away the languor of an Italian spring day. Her eyes looked brighter than I had ever seen them, and there was a faint, rosy color in her cheek, which added greatly to her beauty. Our conversation was very strange, at least the first part of it. On her part, it consisted altogether of one monosyllable, two or three times repeated. "This is exceedingly beautiful," I said, gazing from her to the landscape. "Could you ever make up your mind to quit these lovely scenes, and dwell in a colder, and less genial land?"

"Yes," she answered.

"And could you there be content and happy, among a people less warm in character, less imbued with taste?"

"Yes," she said, with a sigh, and the color fading away in her cheek.

"And could you go thither with me?" I asked, "and make the whole happiness of one heart that loves you, and brighten one home, where you would reign like one adored?"

"Yes," she answered again; and bent her head till her forehead almost touched her knees.

Then suddenly she started, and, looking up in my face, she added, "But you think not what you do, and I must not let you speak such words, and go on in the same course till you consider well, and determine reasonably." I answered as might be expected, that I had considered, that I had thought what I was doing, and that my happiness depended upon her.

"Then," she answered, "I will never make you unhappy, if it be in woman's power to make you otherwise. But there are many things to be thought of, even before you speak to my father on this subject, and let us think of them, and speak of them calmly. Give me but a moment or two to collect my ideas." She bent down her head upon her hands as she spoke, and there ensued between us a conversation which lasted more than half an hour, which was very grave, and in some degree sad upon her part. Nothing was very clear, nothing was very distinct in it. Twice she mentioned her sister's name, and more than twice we came near the subject which I know was in both our thoughts. But there were feelings of delicacy on both sides which, young as our love was, prevented our speaking our suspicions at that time. That day, however, Mr. Conway rode out again, and as the marquis himself had walked down to a neighboring villa,

he lingered about in the gardens with Narcissa by his side. He seemed to have made his peace with her, and Beatrice kept close to me during the whole time of his stay. They gave us plenty of opportunity to converse at our ease, and then it was that I ventured to make some direct remark to my fair companion, in regard to his strange attentions toward her sister. Beatrice looked timidly round, and then clasping her hands together, she murmured, "He is a villain!" Her face was very pale as she spoke; but the subject being once broached, I went on, saying, "Dear Beatrice; if you know him to be such, why not at once call your father's attention to his conduct?" She remained silent for a moment or two; and then looking sadly up in my face, she answered, "I fear my father owes him money. It is right that you should know it; for although I do not believe that you seek wealth with me, yet perhaps you do not know that I shall have nothing. I am not well informed as to the facts; but of that fact, at least, I am sure. These estates pass away at my father's death to a male relation, and I have heard Mr. Conway speak to him of a bond, and of interest due, and I am sure that instead of having any thing to give or to leave, he is in debt to that odious man."

This intelligence did not take me by surprise; for I had heard from my banker that the Marquis di Spezzia was in any thing but easy circumstances. I was therefore prepared to say, at once, that I never expected any thing with Beatrice but her heart, and that if she could give me that I was satisfied. The thoughts of both, however, reverted speedily to the subject of her sister's conduct, and I asked what she thought was to be done,

endeavoring to point out, as delicately as I could, the dangerous position in which she was placed.

"If your father is precluded from interfering," I asked, "what can be done?" Suddenly she raised her head, with her eye bright, and her color heightened, and answered in a firm, resolute tone, "I will interfere. I wish to yield to my sister in every thing. I have never contested any thing with her; but if I see that she is likely to fall down the precipice on the brink of which she stands, I repeat, I will interfere; and I believe there is a power in the honesty of my purpose that will support me, notwithstanding her pride and fiery temper.

Our conversation proceeded for nearly an hour longer without interruption, and it is hardly possible to tell how greatly Beatrice rose in my esteem during that short time. I had loved her with the fondness of a man for a child; but when reverence mingled with fondness, I felt that it was love indeed. About the end of that time, I chanced to look round, and saw Conway and Narcissa standing under the portico of the villa. Her eyes were bent upon the ground; but his were fixed upon myself and Beatrice, with a look not easily forgotten. However, the marquis returned, and seemed evidently annoyed to find Mr. Conway there; and yet he was exceedingly courteous to him.

On the following day we were to return to Florence, and I resolved to take the first opportunity, after our arrival in the city, to inform him of my love for Beatrice, and to ask her hand; but several days elapsed before that opportunity presented itself, and then, to my great surprise and grief, he decidedly rejected my suit. He was highly honored, he said, and so was his daugh-

ter; but it could not be. He had the highest esteem and respect for me, but a multitude of considerations prevented his accepting my proposal. I was mortified, and somewhat angry, but still for Beatrice's sake I was about to press for explanations, and endeavor to obviate difficulties, when suddenly, Mr. Conway broke in upon us, with a gay, laughing, jovial air, which he seldom assumed, and which I could evidently see was affected. I could not bear it, and I quitted the house at once, resolving to write what I had to say. I changed my mind, however, before the next morning. Turning all that had occurred in my brain, a suspicion suggested itself that Conway might have something to do with the conduct of the Marquis di Spezzia. I hardly paused to consider his object; to ask myself what could be his designs; but a strong impression took possession of me that he had exercised his power over Beatrice's father, to make him reject one who had remarked his criminal passion for Narcissa, and whom he consequently feared. Love generally becomes more pertinacious from opposition, at least, such was the case with myself, and I determined to make any effort or sacrifice to free Beatrice from the painful situation in which she was placed, and to make her mine. I determined therefore to see the marquis on the following morning, boldly to tell him all I had perceived, and all I suspected, and to offer him any pecuniary assistance which might free him from the trammels into which he had fallen. I went at an hour when I believed I should find him alone; but to my great surprise, I was informed, at the house, that he had gone suddenly with the family to his villa in the country, and I returned mortified and disappointed to the Lung-Arno. I can not de-

scribe the state of my mind during that day. My whole thoughts were confused, my purposes varying, and indefinite. That Beatrice should be mine, that I would frustrate the designs of the man I considered my enemy, that I would overcome every difficulty, and tread obstacles under foot, I determined; but how all this was to be accomplished I could not divine. I laid out a hundred plans, many of which were very wild, and perhaps the wildest of them was, to insult Conway, and to force him either to fight me or to drive him from Florence. I suspected, I know not why, that he was a coward, and I thought that if so, I should speedily succeed in one part of my object, at least. Strange, wrong, and imprudent as this course was, I took some steps in its pursuit. I went back to the Via Ghibbelina about three o'clock, and asked for Mr. Conway; but here again I was met by the same reply. He and his family had gone out of town that morning, to the villa on the Apennines. My resolution was immediately taken. I would go thither on the following morning myself, I thought, and force an explanation.

"A letter, sir, in great haste," said my servant, when I reached my hotel. "The messenger would not wait, but he seemed in great anxiety."

I tore the letter open hastily, and found a few words, signed Beatrice di Spezzia. "Come to us immediately," she said; "if you would save us all. I have spoken boldly to my father, and he has confided in me. He is in the power of a villain, as I thought, and is nearly frantic with the agony of his situation. I have spoken for you, my friend, and have told him there is one who will counsel us well, even if he can not assist us. He

talks of going to you, but it would be better that you should come without a moment's delay. Oh, come, if you love me, as I believe you do."

I ordered horses to the carriage directly, and set out. It was a glorious evening, with the sun setting in purple majesty in the west, and the moon rising over San Miniato in the east, and mingling their light above; but twilight soon succeeded, and darkness came over the earth as I wound up the long hill on the Bolognese road. I had put my pistols into the carriage, and took my servant on the box, thinking that perhaps before I had done, I might need the assistance of both; but alas! neither pistol nor servant could be of any avail.

It was a little before nine o'clock, when at a spot about half a mile below the Tre Maschere, the carriage turned off down the by-road which led to the villa. The distance was not a quarter of a mile; but about three hundred yards from the entrance to that road, my coachman drew a little to the side, and a carriage with post horses passed us at full speed. At the first indication, I put my head to the window, but the travelers went so rapidly that I could not see who they were. It seemed to be an English carriage, however, and I thought, with some satisfaction, that probably the villain had been already driven from the house. I told the man to drive on quick, and in two or three minutes I was at the back entrance of the villa. It was a villa in Palladian style, graceful, and highly decorated without, but rambling, and somewhat inconvenient within. I found no servants in the hall, though there was a light burning, and I went in to the inner vestibule, whence rose a flight of stairs, leading to the chambers above. I heard voices speaking

on the first floor, as I passed the foot of the stairs, and the tones, I know not why, excited some feeling of anxiety. But I went on into the great saloon, and found no one there. There was no one in the little saloon, nor in the dining-room. Turning on my steps, I went back to the stairs, and met an Italian woman servant coming down whom I knew. Her face was covered with tears, and the moment she saw me, she clasped her hands together, with a mute gesture of profound grief, and rushed past me, as if to weep in private. I hesitated no longer, but ran up the stairs, and directed by several voices, entered a room which I believed to be that of Beatrice. There were two or three people in the room —servants, and a man who seemed to be *il medico*— gathered together round a spot on the floor, and I darted forward and pushed them aside. There she lay, beautiful, lovely, even in the deep stillness that had fallen over her. Her face was as pale as ashes, her eyes closed, and all her garments dabbled with blood.

For a moment or two I gazed in horror and despair, and then grasping the arm of the physician, exclaimed, "I charge you, in the presence of all these witnesses, not to let any one quit this house, 'till I bring competent persons to examine into this dreadful transaction."

The man murmured something as to his want of authority; but I shook my finger at him, saying, "Remember, I charge you;" and running back to the carriage, I ordered the coachman to drive to Florence with all speed. How shall I describe my sensations during the journey back? I am afraid almost all my first feelings were those of rage—grief undoubtedly mingling with them; but still with rage predominant. Gradually, how-

ever, anger subsided, and gave way to sorrow—deep, profound, intense. So young, so beautiful, so good, so graceful, to be lost at the very moment she was mine! Oh, it was too terrible, and I wept like a very child. For more than one long hour I gave way to feelings very near akin to despair. I felt then how deeply, how truly I had loved her. I felt that I could willingly have sacrificed my life for hers. But grief was vain. Anger only could be satisfied. Vengeance, I thought I would have vengeance, on whosesoever head it might fall. The desire was so strong, the thirst so intense, that it seemed as if my head were turning with it. During the whole of that day, and the one that preceded it, I had been agitated by violent emotions, and now the climax seemed to have come, and my mind was unable to support the weight. As we drove along, all sorts of strange images presented themselves to my eyes: some dark and terrible, some light and ludicrous; all accompanied with a consciousness that they were not real, that the sight which saw them was not sane. This continued all the way down the lower part of the hill, through the gates, to the police-office. But there I could get no one to attend to me. Though I told the inferior officials all that had occurred—though I urged them to immediate action—they still referred me to to-morrow, and I was obliged to return to my hotel, telling me that their chief would call upon me early.

I passed the night in walking up and down my room. Sleep was of course impossible, with a thousand busy fiends tearing my heart, and setting my brain on fire; but about seven o'clock on the following day, the chief of police made his appearance, and my tale was soon

told. I am afraid it was somewhat incoherent; and seeing that he thought me mad, I said, "You think my brain troubled, signor, and so perhaps it is; for the scene I witnessed last night, the anguish of my mind, and the utter want of sleep and rest during two days, have made me ill; but I am nevertheless quite well enough to accompany you to the villa Spezzia, and there you will find that all I have said is true."

He told me firmly and decidedly, however, that I should not be permitted to accompany him; that he would go immediately, but go alone, and that in the mean time he insisted I should see a physician. Doctor P—— was sent for, even without my consent, and it was evident that he thought me very ill, for he not only wrote a prescription, but waited with me till the draught had been brought from the apothecary's, and saw me take it. It must have contained some strong narcotic, for in a few minutes I fell into a profound sleep, from which I did not wake till evening. I was refreshed and calmed, and though my grief was as deep as ever, I could let my mind rest upon it tranquilly, though painfully. About an hour after I awoke the chief of police returned, and told me the result of his investigations. He told me he had examined all the servants, and every body in the villa, and that there could be no earthly doubt of the young lady having deliberately destroyed herself. At first I replied furiously that it was false; but remembering the impression my incoherence had produced in the morning, and fearing personal restraint, I soon contrived to conceal my feelings, begged his pardon, and saw him depart with pleasure. It was too late to go out to the villa that night, but with cold, bitter determination I re-

solved to see the marquis and his eldest daughter on the following day, and to tell them they had murdered the child and the sister. That she had died by her own hand I would not believe, and I knew well how often the crimes in noble Italian families are vailed by the cautious reports of the police. There was another, too, on whom I resolved to have vengeance: the man who I felt sure had been the cause of all the evil. I would haunt him like an avenging spirit, I thought. I would either bring him to the field, and have life for life, or I would follow him throughout the world, and drive him from society wherever he set his foot. But my first business was with the marquis and his daughter; and I hardened my heart to devise words that might be daggers. My feelings were very strange—such as I had never felt in England. It seemed as if the fierce, unrelenting spirit of old Italy had entered into me, and changed my whole nature.

Sleep I had none that night; and by daylight on the following morning I was ready to depart; but just as I was about to set out, the physician appeared—a mild, tranquil old man, with a good deal of sympathy in his tone—whether the natural breathing of a kindly spirit, or mere professional affectation, I do not know. He would have persuaded me to remain at home, but finding thas I was resolved to go, he told me that he had heard the story of the Spezzia family from the chief of police; that he was much interested in it, and that if I could give him a place in my carriage, he would accompany me. I was glad of a companion and a witness, and I let him go. He tried to talk with me by the way. I could

see that his object was to soothe and calm me; but I was in no mood for conversation, and I remained silent.

The morning was still cool and fresh when we turned off to the right from the Bologna road, with the summit of that fatal villa rising over the olive and fig trees before us. There was a little village church, with its beautiful campanile, some forty yards to the left of the road, about half way down, and I saw some young peasant girls standing round the open porch, and looking in. It instantly struck me that the body lay there, and I resolved to alight, and look upon her beautiful face once more. How the ban of the Roman Catholic church against suicide had been got over I know not, and stop not to inquire. In that land money and intrigue do every thing, and therefore there was no marvel. I made the coachman stop, and got out, while the old physician followed me uninvited. We walked up the path; the young girls gathered round the door, screening the interior from our sight till we had mounted the steps. Then the sound of our footfalls made them move away to the right and left, and what was it I beheld? Two handbiers, covered with mortuary cloths, lay just in the entrance from the great door, with the bodies of the dead upon them, and flowers strewed upon the corpses. Gracious Heaven! I shall never forget it! I darted forward. I stood by the side of the biers, and gazed down; but not on the countenance of Beatrice. There were the fine features, the tall, fair brow, the raven locks of her sister Narcissa. There was the thin, worn, anxious countenance of the Marquis di Spezzia. But no Beatrice was there.

"Good God; what is all this?" I exclaimed, looking

at the priest who stood by Narcissa. He shook his head sadly, and answered not. But the old physician laid his hand upon my arm, saying, "Come away, come away;" and I returned to the carriage, and drove straight to the villa, resolved to wring some information from the servants. I thought I saw it all. I fancied that they had given the honors of the church to the cruel, the hard-hearted, and the vicious, and refused them to the innocent. The door of the villa stood open, as usual, and there were two servants in the hall, but both ran away at once the moment they saw me. I entered, however, and could hear voices speaking; and the next instant there was a step in the vestibule, coming round the foot of the stairs. I thought I knew the sound of the foot-fall, but for an instant I could not see; and I wonder I did not fall down dead with the beating of my heart. The next moment Beatrice herself ran forward, with her hair falling over her shoulders, her eyes stained with weeping, but with her arms stretched out toward me. I caught her in my embrace: I pressed her warmly to my bosom: I murmured my surprise and joy, while she sobbed forth, "Thank God! Thank God! I thought even you had deserted me."

Holding her still in my arms, I carried her toward the saloon, where I had seen her lying two days before; but she whispered, "Not there! not there!" and I bore her into the lesser room. But it was long, very long, before I could obtain from her any distinct account of what had happened.

It was all in detached fragments, even when I did hear it; but I found, at length, that the same sight which had deceived me, had, probably, deceived others. It

would seem that Narcissa had discovered the fact of Beatrice having sent a messenger to me, and either guessed, or found out the contents of her note. She sought her out in the saloon, and assailed her with fierce and angry language. From her sister's answers she learned that her own criminal intercourse with Conway was discovered, and her father coming in at the moment, a scene ensued which must have been terrible, but the particulars of which I never learned. She boldly avowed her guilt, however, and the frightful position in which she had placed herself.

Excited almost to phrensy, the marquis sought out Conway, and drove him from the house, daring him to do his worst, and receiving back bitter taunts and threats in return. He did not return to the saloon, and for some quarter of an hour, her sister having left her also, Beatrice remained alone, exhausted and almost overpowered by the scene that had just passed. At length, however, her sister came back, with a knife in her hand, and the poor girl knew not whether her purpose was murder or suicide. Few words passed; for Beatrice sprang up, shrieking for help, and attempted to wrest the knife from her sister's grasp. Her efforts were in vain, however. Narcissa was taller, stronger, endued with the strength of phrensy, and holding her sister back with her left hand, she plunged the knife into her own bosom, exclaiming bitterly, "There! see what you have done! now you are satisfied!" The struggle, the horror, and the anguish were more than the delicate frame of Beatrice could bear, and she fell upon the floor in a death-like fainting-fit, after which she remembered nothing for nearly an hour. Perhaps some remains of sisterly

affection—perhaps mere habitual impulse—induced Narcissa to try to catch her sister as she fell, or to raise her when she had fallen; but, certain it is, that she was found by the servants lying across the inanimate form of poor Beatrice, with the fatal knife still in her hand. She was yet living when they discovered her, and bore her to her chamber; but she only survived a few minutes.

When or how the marquis had died no one knew. He was fouud in his own chamber, seated in his arm-chair, and quite dead. There was no wound or mark of violence upon his body. An empty vial was found in the room, but without any proof that it had ever contained poison, though I had very little doubt that such had been the case. Such was the dark and terrible tragedy at the Villa Spezzia, of which you may hear the neighboring peasantry tell the tale, terribly magnified and distorted. There were many painful things to be done, and various difficulties to be overcome; but the good old medico who had accompanied me from Florence was of infinite service both to me and Beatrice. He soothed and calmed her even better than I could do; for he had more experience of the heart of man and woman, and he brought his medical skill, too, to bear, drawing forth a large pocket-case full of vials, and administering what he knew would tranquillize the dear, unhappy girl. He went, too, to the chief magistrate of the place, to make many arrangements that were necessary, and when he returned, he offered kindly to take the poor girl to his own house, and place her under the care of his wife. No better plan could be devised, and, in the evening, we quitted that dark and melancholy place, and made our way back to Florence. Early on

the following day I flew to Beatrice again; but the fatal experience of the last few days had shaken her confidence in all mankind, and she seemed to doubt even my intentions toward her. Those doubts were soon removed, however; for my very first task was to represent to her that, left alone in the world, as she now was, she must endeavor to overcome her grief so far as to become my wife immediately. Her only answer was, as she clung round my neck, "Oh, take me away from this dreadful land as soon as may be."

For a few days, several distant relations visited her frequently, and seemed inclined to interfere; but when they found that all the property left by the marquis, except that which went to a male relation, would not suffice to pay his debts, their visits fell away, and Beatrice was left entirely to her own discretion. At that time great difficulties existed in Italy in regard to the marriage of a Roman Catholic to a Protestant, and the only means of solving them rapidly was to induce the old physician and his wife to cross the Alps with me into France, bringing Beatrice along with them. This was easily accomplished by means that are generally all-powerful with Italians, and, two months after her father's and her sister's death, Beatrice became mine. She remained with me for three happy years, and left me the dear boy you have seen. But her health had received a shock at the Villa Spezzia from which it never recovered, and she died calmly in the end of last May. Her fate was a sad one; but she showed no immoderate grief at the approach of an early death, no eager clinging to life, no anxious terror at the view of the world to come. In-

stead of perishing by a sister's hand, as I once thought, or by her own, as Narcissa had perished, she died with her babe by her side, with her husband's arms around her, and with the full faith and hope of a Protestant Christian.

THE GARROTE.

scent of perishing by a sister's hand, as I once thought, or by her own, as Narcissa had perished, she died with her babe by her side, with her homicidal arms around her, and with the full faith and hope of a Protestant Christian.

THE GARROTE.

THE GARROTE.

JANUARY 27, 183—.

WENT to dine with Colonel A——l, the American Consul, one of the most high-toned and agreeable men I ever met. He has lost his arm. I wonder how. One must feel very lopsided without an arm. I should almost fancy that it must give a bias to the mind as well as the body; were it not that the Colonel is so just and equitable in all his notions and feelings—even as between the United States and England, which can not be said of all Americans or of many Englishmen. Perhaps it may be that he had a leaning toward America before he lost his arm, and that has righted him.

The darkest, foggiest night I almost ever saw, and yet frosty—the lamps all looking through the mist like dissipated, worn out comets. Went in a hackney-coach smelling peculiarly fusty, and jolting beyond conception. Found the Colonel, Mr. and Mrs. H—— (American), Sir Uvedale P—— and his niece (English), Mrs. W——, the

charming young widow (English) and Mr. M—— M—— (American).

The latter looks quite a young man, though he must be older than he looks; for he has seen, and gained by seeing, a vast deal of the world, and been in active life during the last war of 1812. He is a very gentlemanly man, and the best teller of a story almost I ever heard. We did not sit long over our wine, but joined the ladies almost immediately. In truth, they wanted comfort, for the wind had risen in a single hour's time; and I believe they fancied it was going to blow the house down. Mr. M—— sat himself down, however, by the pretty widow—I should think he rather liked pretty widows, by his look—and began telling her stories, which not only drew her attention from the wind, but gathered most of us round him. One struck me particularly.

Memorandum: To put it down to-morrow as he told it, as nearly as possible.

I was living as quite a young man, said Mr. M——, in the principal sea-port of one of the Middle States of America, when the war between my country and yours, my dear Madam, unfortunately broke out. I need not tell you all the little incidents of this war which came under my own notice; but a rather interesting occurrence took place, in which I had a share, that I think you may like to hear, as you tell me that your mother was a lady from Havana. We had contrived to pick up a few English prisoners of war, to whom we endeavored to make captivity light; and, among other amusements, in which the officers on parole used to join us, was the good old English game of cricket. We had one French gentleman of our club, an excellent swordsman, but bad

cricketer; and one day he brought with him a fellow-countryman, more to see our sports than to join in them. The latter went by the name of M. de la Rue, and he was one of the handsomest Frenchmen I ever saw, and one of the most athletic, though rather muscular than stout. Between the games, the two Frenchmen amused themselves with fencing at each other with sticks; and Monsieur de la Rue, as he called himself, threw off his coat and bared his arms, when we saw that his right arm was scarred all over with what seemed the marks of old wounds. He was a very remarkable man, and I inquired in the city who and what he was; but nobody could tell me any thing about him. His business there was undivulged, and he seemed only known to the gentleman who had introduced him to our club. I felt a little curiosity, and perhaps might have indulged in that inquisitiveness with which you people of Europe reproach us Americans; but other circumstances called off my attention, and the matter was for the time forgotten.

My father's house had at that time some very extensive transactions with Spain, and he was himself intimately acquainted with Señor O——, the Spanish minister at Washington. I was not, therefore, much surprised to be ordered by my respected parent to prepare for a voyage to Cuba, nor to find a fast-sailing Baltimore schooner chartered, and in rapid progress of equipment before I was at all aware of my destination; but I was a little surprised to be sent off in haste to Washington to confer with Señor O——, at his own request. My father could tell me nothing of what he wanted, but he showed me the letter he had received, which was merely to desire that, as the Señor had heard I was going to Cuba, I

would not fail to let him see me before I sailed. As no time was to be lost, I started for Washington at once, and reached the Spanish embassy at night, about seven o'clock. Señor O—— gracefully got rid of two gentlemen who had been dining with him, and then, to my surprise, ran out of the room himself. I had hardly time to examine a very beautiful painting of a saint, who, I must say, looked much more like a sinner, before he returned with a leathern bag in his hands tightly locked and sealed, and then opened his business. He wished me, he said, to carry that bag with me to Havana, and deliver it, the moment I arrived, into the hands of the Governor, and into no other hands but his.

The eagerness, I may almost say the nervousness of his manner, showed me at once that the contents were precious, and I doubted not at all that they were dispatches of great importance. He did not deny the fact when I put the question to him directly; and then I demurred considerably to the undertaking of the task. The English cruisers were thick in the Gulf and on the Florida coast, and I saw both danger, inconvenience, and discredit in prospect if my schooner were taken and these dispatches found in my baggage. He urged me so strongly, however by the mutual regard existing between himself and my father, that I at length entered into a compromise with him. He agreed that if I saw any certainty of the vessel which carried me being taken, I should be at liberty to pitch the bag and its contents into the sea. I made him attach weights to it before I would receive it, however, and exacted from him written authority to dispose of the dispatches, as I have stated, in case of danger. This being arranged, he entertained me very

hospitably; and on the following day I returned to the port. Every thing was ready on the following morning; but we waited till evening, in order to get out of the harbor under favor of the night. It was at that time blowing a pretty taught breeze, and the wind was favorable. The moon did not rise till nearly morning, and we sneaked out quietly without being perceived, though there were two enemy's brigs of war and a frigate within fifteen miles of us. As soon as we were in the clear, open sea, every reef of canvas was stretched to the breeze, and away we went, bowling over the waters like a ball over a cricket-ground. Day dawned without a sail in sight; but as the sun rose the wind went down, and from that moment we had, for four days, to record nothing on the log but "light winds and variable."

We had been very lucky all this time, for though we had seen a few boats of no great size, nothing in the shape of a ship of war had come across us; but just as we were running along at an easy rate by the eastern end of the Great Bahama, we suddenly descried a suspicious-looking sail to windward. How we had not perceived it before I do not know; for it seemed to me to start suddenly out of the water, and the ship, whatever she was, could not be more than ten miles off. She brought the wind with her too, for while we had nothing but light, baffling airs, she came up with every sail full, and we soon saw her signals going up, and that plaguy Union Jack, which certified her character plainly enough.

We had nothing for it but to run, and soon after we caught the wind. She sailed well, but we sailed better. The breeze, however, seemed resolved to favor her; for, as will sometimes happen in those latitudes, at least a

dozen times in the following three days, during which time she chased us, she seemed to have a gale while we could not get a cupful. Twice she was near enough to send a shot after us, but we slipped away from her, and made the most curious dodging flight of it that ever I saw. I was full of anxiety about my papers, and for two whole nights kept pacing the deck with hardly a wink of sleep. During the second day's chase, when she pressed us the hardest, I stood with the bag in my hand for six whole hours, ready to drop it into the sea in case her guns begun to tell upon us with such effect as to force us to bring to. At length, however, we got into the Old Bahama channel, and, amidst the islands and banks that stud it, got off, though it was not without great risk; for there was not a man on board who had ever been there before, and our chart was a bad one.

Well satisfied was I, it must be confessed, when we got under the guns of the Moro Castle, for I did not at all like the idea of passing an indefinite time in an English prison, or on board a pontoon.

We were soon permitted to land, and I only waited to rub off the rust of voyaging before I hurried up in search of the Governor, with a black fellow to show me the way.

I only was suffered to penetrate to the anteroom, however; for there I was encountered by an aid-de-camp, who insisted upon knowing my business before he would let me pass further.

I know not whether I have any thing very murderous in my look, continued Mr. M——, with a complacent smile, in the consciousness of a fine person, but I fancy the worthy Spaniard took me for an assassin. When I in-

sisted that my business was with the Governor, and the Governor alone, he called another head to council, an old, gray-haired gentleman, with a very hidalgoish look; but they both came to the same conclusion, that I could not be admitted.

I then entered my protest with American freedom, told them to remember that they had positively refused to admit me, although aware that I came from Señor O——, at Washington, on important business, and that I held them responsible for all the consequences. Thus saying, I left the palace and walked away.

I had not reached the house where I lodged, before I was overtaken by two Spanish soldiers, coming at a great rate, who told me civilly, but peremptorily enough, that I must go back with them to the Governor; and, accordingly, turning round, I retrod my steps. I was ushered from one chamber to another, through a long suite of rooms, till at length, passing an antechamber, where a number of officers were collected, comprising the two scrupulous gentlemen I had previously seen, I entered a small cabinet, where I found a little, ugly man in uniform, whose countenance and demeanor, however, at once impressed one with respect, if not with love. There was something stern, uncompromising, and even haughty in his look, but his manners had much dignified suavity in them, and, after a glance at me from head to foot, he asked me to be seated.

"I understand," he said at length, when I had taken a chair, "that my aid-de-camp, Don Ramon de Roya y Pensalar, under a mistaken impression, refused to admit you. You have something to communicate from Señor Don Alphonso de O——, I believe; what is it?"

"I undertook, your Excellency," I answered, "to deliver into your own hand these dispatches, as soon as I arrived on the island. I know they are of much importance, from the earnest recommendations to speed and secrecy which were given me by my good friend, Señor O——."

Thus saying, I handed him the bag, and he first looked at the lock, and then in my face.

"I have not the key," I said, answering his look.

"We must find one," replied the Governor, dryly; and, taking a pen-knife from the table, he deliberately slit open the bag, and took out the dispatches, which were only two in number. He read the shortest first; and, as he did so, bowed his head politely to me, saying, "Señor M——, I presume. I am very glad to see you, Sir. His Excellency's wishes shall be complied with."

He then turned to the other and longer paper, and perused it with a face full of the liveliest emotions. More than once a coarse Spanish exclamation of surprise burst from his lips, and then a look of triumph lighted up his dark flashing eyes.

"This is brave!" he said, with an exuberant burst of joy. "We shall catch them all four. I am greatly indebted to you, Sir, for your promptness. Pray, give me an account of your voyage."

I did so very succinctly, and the more so, as I saw he was musing over something else all the while, though not sufficiently abstracted to lose all that I said. He smiled at the account of our chase by the English brig of war, and said, laughing. "You need not have been so alarmed about the dispatches. The English, if they had taken them, would have forwarded them to me without

loss of time. You did not know their contents; but they need be no secret now, as they have arrived in time His Imperial Majesty, Napoleon Bonaparte, judges that Europe is not sufficiently large for his dominion, and would fain add the pleasant little island of Cuba, as a sort of summer garden, I suppose. He destines me the honor of a visit from four very distinguished officers of his army; but unfortunately, he has commanded them to come without the usual formalities, and in the guise of simple citizens. Now the Spaniards have an unpleasant habit, when they find an officer of an enemy's army within their limits, out of uniform, and with no external mark of his profession, to look upon him as a spy, and strangle him without mercy. I fear that these gentlemen put their necks in jeopardy. Don Ramon! Don Ramon!"

The aid-de-camp instantly appeared from the other room, and the Governor whispered to him some private orders, after which he introduced me formally to him as his particular friend, directed him to put the palace entirely at my disposal and to look upon my commands as his. I was too well acquainted with Spanish forms and manners not to know that this merely meant to treat me with polite attention, and I soon after took my leave to pursue the business which had called me to Havana However, I was honored the next day with an invitation to dine with the Governor, and, partly on account of having rendered him an important service in bringing him the dispatches, partly on account of the information I gave him regarding the United States, a very friendly feeling established itself between us, and he lost no opportunity of showing me kindness and attention as long as I staid on the island. He expressed great distress

and regret that a war had broken out between England and the United States, and did not scruple to intimate an opinion that there had been faults on both sides, in which I could not, of course, agree, though I wished the war over as heartily as any one.

In the mean time I frequently pondered over what the Governor had told me of the contents of his dispatches; and from Don Ramon, who became a constant companion of my leisure hours, I learned something more. It seemed that the four French officers commissioned by Napoleon to land in Cuba, were instructed to enter into communication with all the discontented inhabitants of the island, and to arrange with them for a general rising against the Spanish authorities, to be supported by a large French force. I found that measures had been taken to insure that a strict examination of every stranger arriving at any of the ports should be instituted, and that all persons presenting themselves under any suspicious circumstances should be immediately sent to Havana.

"Do you think the Governor would really hang them, if he found them?" I asked Don Ramon.

He nodded, with a dark smile, saying, "He is not tender."

Without any very definite cause my mind reverted to the handsome and gallant looking De la Rue, who had appeared at our cricket club, and I could not help entertaining a suspicion that he was one of the adventurous men who had undertaken the Emperor's perilous commission. I held my tongue upon the subject, however, and a few days after my suspicions were strengthened by a letter from my father. He told me, after speaking of other business, that he had had a long conversation with

the Spanish consul in our city regarding a Frenchman I must have seen there, a certain Monsieur De la Rue. That gentleman, he said, had chartered a small sloop to take him to Cuba, and intelligence of the fact having reached the consul—as fine a specimen of the old Castilian gentleman as ever lived—he had sent a message requesting the Frenchman to call upon him. Monsieur De la Rue had not complied, affecting to treat the request as a want of courtesy, and the consul had, in consequence, visited him. Their meeting was very cold; but after a few preliminary observations the Spaniard said, "I have thought it best, Monsieur, to attempt to dissuade you from visiting Cuba. I am prompted merely by humanity, but that impels me to tell you that the Spanish government and the authorities at Havana, have received intimation that four of your countrymen have been commissioned by your sovereign to enter the island of Cuba, for purposes dangerous to the peace of the place and to the rights of our monarch. We seek not to entrap any one—not even an enemy—and therefore I think it better to warn you that every one in Cuba is on his guard, that the whole coast is strictly watched, and that if you should be found to be one of the four persons designated to us, or in any way sharing in their designs, death—a horrible and unsoldier-like death—will be your fate as certainly as you and I now live."

Monsieur de la Rue, my father said, had thanked the consul for the interest he had expressed, with a quiet and easy smile, assured him that he was entirely mistaken as to his character and views, and adding, "as my papers are, I believe, in perfect order, I shall assuredly go, without any apprehensions whatever." My father added, that

notwithstanding these assurances, both he and the consul entertained strong doubts, more especially as the Frenchman had hurried all his preparations from the moment of the interview, and would probably be in Cuba before the letter reached me.

In the latter supposition he was mistaken: the sloop was detained by an accident, and did not appear at Havana for three days after the letter.

On the morning of her arrival I was walking out with a merchant of the city, and saw her sail gayly in and bring to, without the slightest attempt at concealment. But a Spanish armed boat had gone off the moment she hove in sight, having my good friend Don Ramon himself on board with a guard of soldiers. We saw the boat board the sloop, and, after spending about twenty minutes alongside of her, pull back toward the shore. She directed her course toward a landing, from which the general public was excluded; but I was, by this time, a sort of privileged person, on account of the favor shown me by the Governor, and feeling a good deal of interest in what was taking place I walked down uninterrupted. I soon perceived that, seated among the soldiers, there was a person in the garb of a civilian, and when the boat touched, Monsieur de la Rue was marched up to the castle between two soldiers with fixed bayonets, while one of the boatmen carried up a trunk upon his shoulders, which seemed to have suffered some very hard usage, for the bottom was broken in. Though very pale, Monsieur De la Rue's face was perfectly calm, and catching sight of me as he passed, he noticed me by a courteous bow.

It did not escape the eyes of Don Ramon, who was

following, and taking my arm, he said, "Come up, come up. Do you know that man?"

"He has been staying for some weeks at—," I answered; "and he passed a day with myself and some friends at a cricket club. We could none of us make out who or what he is."

"I will tell you what he is," answered Don Ramon, bitterly; "he is a spy and a traitor, and you will see him hanged before to-morrow night. This is one of the very men for whom we have been looking. He thought he had made all safe by having a double bottom to his trunk—no sliding contrivance, but tight fixed and glued together. The butt end of a musket soon opened it, however; and I have got his commission, and all his papers, in my pocket—enough to hang a score."

This was all said as we were walking on, for I did not choose to show any reluctance to accompany the Governor's aid-de-camp; and we were soon in the little cabinet, in presence of his Excellency himself. I shall not easily forget the look of bitter exultation which lighted up his dark face while, in a low voice, Don Ramon made his report, and laid the papers he had discovered and seized before him. De la Rue, as he had called himself, was in the mean while standing between the two soldiers at the other side of the room, with an air perfectly easy and graceful, though not without a certain degree of calm sternness on his countenance. The Governor eyed him from time to time, while listening to Don Ramon, and at length, raising his head, he said in a loud voice, and in French, "What is your name?"

"Armand, Baron de Boisrobin, chef d'escadron unat-

tached in the army of his Majesty the Emperor Napoleon," replied the Frenchman at once.

The Governor quietly inclined his head, saying, "It is so;" and then whispered a word to Don Ramon. The prisoner was immediately removed from the room, and I was about to follow, but the Governor beckoned me up, and I found that Ramon had not forgotten to report the Baron's recognition of my humble self.

"What do you know of that man?" asked the Governor.

I repeated what I had told his aid-de-camp; and he then asked me a dozen or more questions concerning him, to all which I answered as well as I could.

"Come up and pass the evening with us," said his Excellency, when he had done; "we have got one of the villains, and we must make him discover the other three."

"Does your Excellency believe that any of them ever have landed?" I ventured to ask.

He slowly nodded his head, and I retired. I passed an exceedingly pleasant evening with the Governor, his family, and a small party. We had music and dancing, and very pleasant conversation. He was affable, and indeed, in his family circle, charming: fond of his daughters, especially the little one, almost to doting; and seeing him with them, and some intimate friends, I felt as if the words of Don Ramon— "He is not too tender"—were almost a libel. I little knew what was going on in a dungeon hard by, while we were dancing and singing in the sweet air of a Cuban evening. It has often struck me as strange, and almost marvelous, to see men, the most susceptible of kindly affections, when the avenues of the heart are accidentally opened by domestic

ties or old associations, shut and barricade those avenues, as if with bars of steel, against their fellow men of the general world.

I was detained at Havana longer than I expected: the business I had to transact proved more difficult than it had at first seemed; but often there were long pauses, during which I had nothing to do but to amuse myself with what was going on in the place. About this time there was a great deal of excitement. Messengers were coming and going; boats were searched very strictly, passports examined with the utmost care. Men were arrested in various parts of the island, and almost a cordon of troops was drawn round Matanzas, from some suspicion, the exact cause of which I never discovered. Of the Baron de Boisrobin no one heard any thing definite. Some people said he had been tried and strangled in prison; others that he was still alive: and Don Ramon was peculiarly mysterious, assuring me that he knew less than any one in the city—which I did not believe.

One day, however, about two o'clock, the Governor sent for me, and after delaying as long as I decently could—for it was very hot—I went up to him. I found him in his slippers and robe de chambre, puffing away a cigar, on a little low Moorish looking couch, and in a blessedly cool room. He gave me a cigar and some sugar and water, and as soon as his servant was gone approached his business, by saying, "You speak French, I think."

"Yes," I answered; "I have been a good deal in the habit of speaking it."

"As well as Spanish?" asked the Governor.

"Better, I trust," was my reply; for though I could

talk Spanish fluently enough, I often made a gross blunder.

"I dare say you would like to see your acquaintance, Monsieur Boisrobin," said the Governor.

I paused ere I answered, for I was not sure what might come next, and I rather suspected that an interview with the prisoner, without being of any benefit to him, might be very painful to myself. "Our acquaintance, your Excellency, is very slight," I said at length; "and I know not whether it might be agreeable to him to see me."

"Oh, yes. He will be glad to see any body," replied the Governor. "You had better go to him; and I wish you would make him comprehend that his safety and his comfort depend upon his making the revelations I have required of him regarding the landing-place of his comrades."

I drew myself up, and answered gravely: "Any message that your Excellency chooses to send I will convey; but on such subjects I can say nothing as from myself."

He frowned a little, but he replied: "Well, well. Tell him what I say. The truth is, Ramon speaks hardly any French at all. My secretary, unfortunately, is ill; and of course it does not befit me to visit a prisoner in his cell." Then pausing for a minute, he added slowly: "I wish that he should know his fate. It is in his own hands; but it can not be much longer delayed. A clear and full confession, or—the garotte!" and he pronounced the last word from the bottom of his throat, with a guttural tone that seemed to give it tenfold bitterness; and simply replying, "I will tell him exactly what your Excellency says," I looked round for some one to guide me.

The Governor rang a little silver bell, and a fantastically dressed negro boy appeared. He was told to call somebody else; and that somebody was sent for a jailer. The latter arrived at length, and having received his orders, conducted me to the dungeons of the castle. It would take a long while to describe either my long walk to the dungeons, or the sensations which it produced. They were all very melancholy, that I know; and the sight of the barred doors and damp passages roused feelings partaking in some degree of indignation, and in some degree of sorrow. At length we stopped at a heavy door, iron bound, bolted, and barred. The jailer opened it, but at first I could hardly see any thing within. It was broad daylight without, and the passages were not very dark, but here all was dim obscurity, with nothing but a faint square patch of light, coming apparently from above, in one corner of the dungeon. I thought I could discover something like a low bed in one corner, and the figure of a man stretched upon it; but I was not sure till he spoke to me.

The jailer had been told to let me converse with the prisoner alone; and, therefore, telling me he would wait near in the passage, he suffered me to enter, and closed the door behind me. I said that Monsieur de Boisrobin spoke to me, for his eyes, accustomed to the twilight of his dungeon, saw and recognized me at once.

"Ah, Mr. M——," he said, as the man was shutting the door, "this is very kind of you to come and see a poor prisoner."

His voice sounded faint and hollow, but I could not yet discern his features clearly enough to trace what effect confinement had wrought upon them, although he rose

from the bed as he spoke, and I could hear the heavy chains clank upon his limbs.

"I must not take any credit to myself," I answered; "for the truth is, Monsieur De la Rue, the Governor has sent me to you, charged with a message, which I must deliver, though I fear it will be without effect."

"De la Rue!" he said, with a slight laugh. "Call me Boisrobin, my good friend; no use of keeping up assumed names now. They know all. But what says the Governor?"

"Pray remember," I replied, advancing and shaking hands with him, "that the words I am going to speak are the Governor's, not mine, and I only undertook to repeat them to you because it gave me a chance of seeing you. The truth is, the secretary is ill, and the Governor has no one else he chooses to trust who can speak French."

Anticipating his feelings, I was anxious to prevent him from thinking that I would strive to lead him into the betrayal of his comrades; but he answered so frankly, "Ah, go on; go on. I know the difference between an American and a Spaniard," that I proceeded to tell him, word for word, what the Governor had said.

All my precautions had not been too much. He started up like one stung by a snake, and exclaimed, "Do you speak this to me? Do you, an American gentleman, propose treason, baseness, cowardice? Let them take me to the garrote. You shall see how a Frenchman can die, rather than commit an act of treachery. *Sacre*, die! do you take me for a *lache?*"

"Not in the least," I replied, well comprehending the feelings in which this burst of angry indignation originated.

"Pray remember that I told you I only undertook to repeat to you the Governor's words in order to gain admission to you. I knew what you would feel, and told him I would not add one word of persuasion from myself."

"You did right—you did right!" he said, a little pacified, but yet with a good deal of heat. "Tell him for me that I say, No! If it be in his power, and if a civilized world will tolerate it, let him light a pile in the market-place and burn me alive. He shall not wring one word from my lips."

"I doubt it not, my dear Sir," I answered; "but pray be calm. I have done my errand. You have given your answer, and it I will deliver. Let us now talk of other things. Is there any thing in my power that can be done for you?"

He seated himself again on the side of the bed, and remained for a moment or two in silence. I seated myself beside him, and, with eyes more accustomed than at first to the obscurity, perceived that he was terribly emaciated.

"There is little that can be done for me in this world," he said, at length, in a sad and hollow tone. "I have but to die, and that there is no escape from. Yet, one thing. I have a wife, Mr. M—. I should wish her to know that I died like a man of honor. Whatever death they may put me to matters little. There is no dishonor really in any kind of death, but the death of a coward. I wish, after I am dead, that you would let her know that I died as I have lived, fearless—that I betrayed no one. Have you a pencil and paper? Let me give you her address. Can you see to write it down?"

I took out my memorandum-book and wrote what he dictated, and he then asked earnestly, "You will write to her? You will let her know?"

"On my honor, I will," I answered; "but is there nothing I can do for you in life, Monsieur de Boisrobin?"

"I should wish you," he continued, pursuing the same train of thought, "to be present at my death, if they put me to a public death. Then you can testify to her that I died honorably."

"What do you mean," I asked, "by a public death? You do not surely think they will assassinate you here in prison?"

He drew a little closer to me, and said, in a low tone, "Here, feel my hand!"

I did as he asked, and found the once strong, muscular hand merely a bunch of bones; and then, speaking almost in a whisper, he added, "They are starving me to death!"

I shuddered as if a chill blast of wind had struck me; but he went on to say, "They give me nothing but a small piece of bread and that pitcher of water each day. Every night a physician comes and feels my pulse. He asks no questions of me, and I ask him none. He knows by the pulse how long it will last, and I shall know soon enough."

"Good God! this is horrible!" I exclaimed. "But they dare not carry forward such atrocity, and yet admit me to see you."

"Perhaps it may not be their intention to carry it to death itself," he answered. "I hope not, for then no one would know how I died. Probably their intention is—the base hounds!—to break my spirit—to bow my heart,

in the hope of wringing from the starving prisoner the betrayal of his friends. They may think to tame me by want of food. I have heard that men tame wild beasts so. But if they do put me to death publicly, you be near the scaffold, and mark me well."

"Horrible as it must be, I will," I answered. "But now, Monsieur de Boisrobin, let me do something more for you. Let me supply you with money. Here, take my purse. I am sorry there is not more in it; but I did not know for what purpose the Governor desired to see me."

Again he laughed, this time almost gayly. "Money!" he said, "what should I do with money here, mon cher ami?"

"More perhaps than you imagine," I replied; "these jailers are all to be bribed; and by giving them money, you may, perhaps, obtain some wholesome food."

He seemed to think over what I said for a minute or two, but then answered firmly, "No! It would only prolong my misery. Although there is a gnawing devil here within me, that makes my heart beat at the very name of food, yet I will not give way to the weakness. The sooner it is over, the better. I thank you from my soul for your kindness, but I will not have the money with me lest I be tempted. All I seek is a speedy death."

Just then the jailer opened the door and asked if I had done, saying doggedly that he could not wait longer.

"Two minutes more, my friend," I answered, in Spanish; and then, as he once more partially closed the door, I inquired if the prisoner had any thing more to say.

"No," he answered sadly; "yet I would fain have you stay with me. This solitude and the utter absence of

all occupation depresses me more than even the starvation. Try and gain admission to me again. Tell them you will attempt to persuade me to what they want—and you shall, too, if you like—I will not misunderstand you again. But never let them think you have shaken me in the least—remember that. Still try to come. Oh! it is a pleasant sound, a friend's voice, and I would fain hear it once again before I die."

I could have wept, and indeed I believe I did; but I could not linger longer, and promising to do my best, I wrung his hand and left him.

Vain was the brighter light—vain was the fresh air to remove the impression of all I saw and heard in that dim, noxious cell. My heart was wrung, and all that my return to open day did was to rouse grief into feelings of anger. Had the way not been long, I should have met the Governor as cold and haughty as himself. But I had time to reflect, that if I did so, I should deprive myself of all chance of seeing the poor captive again.

I found his Excellency in the room where I had left him, and seated on the same sofa, quietly smoking another cigar. His little daughter came in, and he patted her head and pinched her cheek. Good Heaven! can such things be? Are there such contrasts in human nature?

I told him the answer to his message, and at first he only said, "Obstinate fool?" A minute after, however, he added, "Well, he is a brave man and a man of honor. Yet he must die if he persists. It can not be tolerated that emissaries of this French usurper should roam the island, stirring up the people against their lawful sovereign, unpunished."

"Perhaps, your Excellency, if I were permitted to see him again when he has thought more of the proposal," I answered, "I might be able to persuade him."

"I think not," answered the Governor; "the same proposal was made to him before through my secretary. I offered him a free pardon, and even his liberty, if he would tell where his companions were to land, and where he now supposed them to be; and he made the same reply, only a little more fiercely than you have stated it. However, we will see. If, on thinking over the matter, I judge you can help me, I will trouble you," and then he offered me hospitalities which I declined, and went home with a sad heart.

During the next four days I saw Don Ramon three times, and spoke to him very freely my opinion of starving a prisoner.

"It is for his own good," answered the young officer, "merely to bring down his stout resolution, and induce him to tell all. However, he will not be starved to death. A physician sees him every day, and as soon as it comes near death, he will be publicly executed. The Governor would fain spare him; for we all admire his almost Castilian honor, but he must either speak or die, that is clear."

I did not see the consequence; and remarked that to my mind they should either have executed him at once, in which I admitted they would have been fully justified, or, having tortured him as they had done, should give him his life.

Don Ramon looked upon these things easily, and merely shrugged his shoulders at my American notions.

I was never permitted to see poor Monsieur de Bois-

robin in prison again; but at the end of five long days, I learned that his execution was to take place in the Plaza, at noon. The platform and the pillar with its iron screw and the chair, were already there when I received the intelligence; but mindful of my promise, though with a feeling of sickening horror, I went out, and, by favor, got close to the scaffold. Don Ramon, whom I saw with the guard, told me that the prisoner had remained firm to the last; and that as the physician had pronounced he had not more than four-and-twenty hours to live without a change of diet, it had been judged better to bring the fearful ordeal to an end, and put him to death at once.

"The Governor is very much moved," he said. "I never saw him so much affected in my life. But his duty must be done, you know, and he has tried every thing to save him."

I had to wait a long while—at least the time seemed frightfully long to me; for I was in a state of nervous excitement indescribable. All sorts of passions seemed warring in my breast, and when the executioner took his place behind the chair, I felt that if I had had a pistol with me I should have shot him. At length came the roll of a muffled drum; for in those days they performed such acts with ceremony at Havana; and being a tall man, as you see, I could descry the terrible procession winding on over the heads of the crowd. In that procession, however, there was but one figure that my eyes particularly remarked. I caught a glimpse indeed of a Catholic priest in his robes, and several functionaries; but the Baron de Boisrobin was all to me.

He was very pale and terribly emaciated. He was

evidently feeble too; how could he be otherwise? But still he marched with a military air and a firm step, his head raised and erect, and his eye running over the crowd of people which nearly filled the Plaza. As he came near, his eye lighted upon me; a smile, transient but pleasant, passed over his worn features, and he slightly inclined his head. He mounted the few steps leading to the platform with as much firmness and dignity as if he had been about to take his place on a throne, and seated himself in the fatal chair without profering a word to the populace, who could not have understood much of what he said, whether he had spoken in French or in Spanish. They tied down his arms, and then the executioner fastened the hateful collar round his neck, while a priest held up the crucifix before his eyes. I could not perceive the slightest change of countenance, and the minister of vengeance took the fatal screw in his hands.

At that moment the Governor's secretary stepped up to his side, and addressed him in French in a loud voice, supposing, I imagine, that his thoughts might be confused and require arousing before he could comprehend.

"Monsieur," he said, "his Excellency the Governor is touched with your courage and your chivalrous character, and is willing to make one more effort to save you from a terrible fate. He now by my lips offers you what must do away with all scruples on the score of honor. He bids me say, that if you will state where your comrades landed, and where on your conscience you believe they are to be found, not only shall you yourself have life and liberty, but they also shall be pardoned."

Every word reached me clear and distinct, for the whole crowd kept breathless silence at that moment, and I gazed on Boisrobin's face with eager hope. I could see he was shaken. A momentary look of hesitation passed over his fine countenance; but then a stern, resolute expression succeeded.

"Tell the Governor," he said, "I thank him. When we four departed from France we swore never in any circumstances to betray each other, and to aim at our own object till death ended our efforts. They may succeed, though I have failed!"

"He ceased. The secretary took a step back and made a sign. The vile screw turned; the gallant man's head fell suddenly forward on his bosom, and a fiend-like shout burst forth from the mob.

I have never been in Havana since, for the sight of that spot would be insupportable to me.

THE RAVEN.

THE RAVEN.

THE RAVEN.

FROM my earliest to my latest days, I have always had a peculiar delight in what I may call "the society of mere animals." By that term, I mean the members of that part of creation which are termed in Holy Writ "the brutes that perish," and to which the general opinion of mankind denies the privilege of soul. Perhaps it is so; perhaps they have not souls; for I have come to the conclusion, after much pondering and some observation, that here below we have not a double but a triple existence, and that, however intimately linked together in our human nature, body, intellect, and soul are distinct entities.

I can conceive, then, that "the brutes that perish" have no soul, although many of them display intellectual qualities equal to those of man, and perceptive qualities —probably (if we could see deep enough) entirely corporeal—often greatly superior. Nevertheless, their habits, their faculties, their strange approximation to the

human creature—the share of reason and even imagination which many of them possess, have always been to me matters of deep interest and study.

When I was a mere boy, I had innumerable pets, living the short life of all such slaves of childhood, and succeeded immediately by others. I remember some scores of owls and starlings, dogs and squirrels, parrots and dormice; but they afforded me, I believe, a different kind of amusement from that which they generally furnish to children. They set me thinking, observing, analyzing. They all had to me a spirit, as it were; and although I had never, at that time, heard of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, it seemed to me that somehow they were akin to me. As I grew up, I loved to discover some resemblance between the bird or beast and persons whom I knew—sometimes in the mere shape of the face and head, sometimes in the expression, sometimes in the traits of character. I believed and still believe that there are in the vast creation of things seen and unseen, links of sympathy, harmonies, relationships, which escape the eye of coarse observers, and I fondly hoped to make something out of the enigma by much study.

One of my early pets, and one which remained longest with me, was a raven, proverbially enduring and long lived. He was hardly fledged when I bought him of a man who sold birds in Covent Garden Market in those days; but as he advanced in life he grew troublesome, and was removed to a house belonging then to my father (now my own), some ten miles from London. One wing was clipped, to prevent my erratic friend from absconding; and there he lived for many years, while I

passed through the schoolboy stage of life, seeing him occasionally during the holidays, and onward till I attained maturity and middle age.

Various were the mischievous tricks which Ralph—the invariable name of a raven—played, various the offences he committed, and at first he ran great risk of having his neck twisted for his depredations; but gradually the servants began to find out that his pranks might prove a vail for their own, and that Ralph might be made the scapegoat of many sins. If any thing was lost it was sure to be the raven that took it; and yet, when he was threatened with capital punishment, all voices were raised to intercede in his behalf.

A very provident gentleman was Master Ralph. Every fragment of his dinner, over and above what he thought fit to consume, was carefully buried for future use; and, with the true spirit of a miser, he would hide in strange holes and corners any glistening piece of metal he could lay his beak upon. The story of the maid and the magpie was too well known for the servants to run any risk in consequence of his depredations, though, as I have stated, he might sometimes be brought into peril in consequence of theirs. He was mightily pugnacious, too; and if any one approached one of his hiding-places, he would attack them boldly with his formidable bill, and peck their feet till he forced them to retire.

One year the gardener forgot to cut his wing after moulting, and away he flew, greatly to my consternation, though I was then more than one-and-twenty; but Ralph had become so accustomed to the place—all his associations were so entirely there—that after enjoying his liberty for an hour or two, he returned at the usual hour of

being fed, and hopped about the garden as familiarly as ever.

I gave strict orders that no one should scare by attempting to catch him, and a sort of tacit convention was entered into between himself and me, to the effect that he should be free to come and go as he pleased, provided he did not forsake his old home, and that he should be regularly fed upon his return.

Unlike most of the human race, he did not abuse his privilege; but, on the contrary, seeming to comprehend at once his position, he made himself quite at ease, frequented the garden, hopped into the kitchen, eyed every thing with knowing and concupiscent eye, and pecked the feet, as usual, of those who approached too near his storehouses.

Thus matters proceeded for some years. Time pressed upon me; sorrows and cares bowed me, and the wearing of mind upon body was sometimes heavily felt. Often I would escape from the city or the crowd—often I would return from foreign travel to that old country-house, and strive to let my thoughts rest in quiet. And there, as in a summer evening I would sit out in the garden under an old apple-tree that grew there, my friend Ralph would frequently hop up to my feet, and turning his head on one side, would look shrewdly up in my face as if inquiring what I was meditating.

But let me say a word or two of that old house without attempting to describe it accurately. It was built, I suppose, about the beginning of the reign of George the Third, though it might have seen that monarch's grandfather. It is neither very large nor very commodious; but it does well enough for me; and its tall rooms, each

almost square, with its grave-looking red face, suit the humor in which I usually seek its seclusion. It looks, in its grave straightness, so like a gentleman of a century ago, that I am sometimes inclined to think that the only thing it wants is a periwig. There is a quaint lawn behind it of some extent, partly filched from the kitchen garden; and I suppose that it is to that circumstance I must attribute the persistence of the old apple-tree I have mentioned, which has been spared by former owners, probably from some affections or associations now long forgotten.

Heaven help us, how many sacred feelings and dear memories are blotted out by time!

Beyond the lawn is the kitchen garden, with three walks running up all the length, and several others crossing them, forming squares surrounded by fruit trees *en espalier*, bearing delicate pears and apples. The lawn and the garden—as well, indeed, as the ground the house stands upon, and the little flower garden in front—are all let into a wide and very wild common, but not at all near the centre thereof. On the contrary, behind the garden, and on the western side, the space of open ground between the fence and the next hedge-row is not more than three hundred yards in width. But, on the east, the common extends some mile and a half, to a village, the church steeple of which may be seen rising over the inequalities of the ground. A clean sandy road runs in front, with a neat country house or two, and some small, tidy cottages on the other side.

The village church itself is a curious old building, of the reign of one of the Edwards. The pavement of the nave is raised a good deal above the level of the church-

yard, so that one is obliged to enter by steps; and underneath is what has once been evidently the crypt, though it is now called "the vaults," and in these vaults repose the mortal remains of several families in the neighborhood, some coffins dating back as far as the reign of Elizabeth, while others are much more modern. None, however, are very recent, for the last heir of the last noble family that had a right to bury there fell in battle, in 1813, and the grated door has never been opened to admit a coffin since. Through that grated door, when the sun, due south-west, shines between the two old yew trees upon that side of the church, one can see far into the crypt, among the tattered velvet, and shreds of gold lace, and tinsel coronets, with which the friends of the dead have bedecked their last resting-place. It always struck me with a sort of homily feeling—the vanities of death shut out from the vanities of life, by the rusty old bars of that grated door.

The old sexton was an oddity in his way, as I have remarked old sextons very often are; but he was a shrewd, cunning, worldly old man, with hanging lower eyelids, showing the red lining thereof. He boasted of having been very handsome in his day; and his son, who bore some resemblance to him, certainly was handsome. But the father had lost all beauty, and the son, who was a purser on board a man-of-war, I never liked. I am not sure what it was I did not like, but it was a something tangible enough to instinct, though perhaps not to reason.

Let it be recollected that this is no after-thought: that this instinctive dislike existed from the first moment

I saw him, which was some where about the year 1826, when he had returned from a cruise, with a good deal of money—at least all the villagers said so. It is marked to memory by peculiar circumstances. There was then a young girl in the village, an exceedingly pretty young girl, with small, delicate features, and beautiful brown eyes, the daughter of the apothecary, who died the year before, leaving a very considerable fortune, for a man in his walk in life. She was about nineteen; and her father, by some strange whim, had thought fit to name me her guardian, an office which I had never sought, but did not think fit to refuse. Poor thing! she wanted some one to take care of her. She was very gentle, and very confiding—not without character, however, though unwilling to pain the meanest of God's creatures.

Poor Mary Bell! how well I remember her.

But it is in connection with her that my repugnance to Dick Cumberland first displayed itself. He came up to the house one day, with his confident and yet rather uneasy air, to ask my consent to his paying his addresses to Mary Bell; and talked a good deal of his means, and the money he had made. I asked if she had directed him to apply to me; but he acknowledged that she had not, talking very properly, however, and saying, that he thought it most decorous to ask my consent, in the first place, before he explained himself to her.

I had no objection to make, but yet I could not get over my dislike to him; and I told him it would be better to wait till she was of age, when she could judge for herself—getting rid of him somewhat unceremoniously.

I cross-questioned her too, as closely as an old bachelor could venture upon with a young ward; and I found

no reason to suppose that she had the slightest predilection for him. Thus I returned to town without any misgivings, and was very little in the country for some time.

It was in the autumn of 1828 that, fatigued in mind and body, I returned to my lonely dwelling, intending to abstract myself entirely from all care, anxiety and labor; and the first day passed quietly enough. I contented myself with repose, asked after nobody, cared for nobody, walked about my garden, examined my house, enjoyed my newspaper, and was almost vexed when the curate came in to take a glass of wine with me after dinner. I suppose that was his object, for he came just as the dessert was put upon the table, and if he did not gain much from me, he certainly gave nothing in exchange. He was the quietest man I ever saw—provokingly quiet.

The next day, however, perfect repose was too perfect, and I began to busy myself about various matters. I had not long to endure tranquillity, for the noon stage brought me a visitor in the shape of the son of my old friend Sharp. He was a young lieutenant in the navy, as active as a monkey, and as little disposed to rest. In an hour he had run over the whole house and grounds, and then he walked out upon the common. By the time he came back, he had seen almost every body in the village, and among the rest young Dick Cumberland and Mary Bell. The former had sailed in the same ship with him, and Charles—that was the boy's name—said he was a good sort of fellow enough. He had, however, told my young friend of a pretended engagement between

himself and Mary Bell, and Charles had insisted upon being taken to see her.

"She's a sweet pretty creature," said the boy, "a great deal too good for Dick Cumberland—not that he is altogether a bad fellow, but I would rather be his commanding officer than his wife. I think I could fall in love with her myself, if I were to try hard."

I do not know whether he did try hard or not; but I know he staid four days, and every day he went over to the village.

When he returned to town I missed him a good deal, for he was a blithe, cheerful creature, pleasant to the eye, and well able to wile away an hour or two with tales of many lands—none better.

After he went, his words in regard to Dick Cumberland returned to my mind, and I thought it but right to go to my pretty little ward, and see a little what she was doing. I spoke to her about her lover; but she denied, with an honest blush, there was any thing like an engagement between them.

"Oh no," she said, "she had no thought of marrying such a person."

There was a little pride in her tone, and, Heaven forgive me, I said nothing to take it down. I spoke to her about my young friend Charles, and for some reason or another the color grew deeper in her cheek than ever. She said little about him indeed, but the schoolmistress, at whose house she lodged, told me he had been there every day, and called him "a charming young gentleman."

The dog had a terrible way of winning old women's hearts, as well as young ones.

Two days after I had a note from Mary telling me that she intended to go to London for a day or two, to escape a persecution that annoyed her. She mentioned no name, but I easily understood what she meant, and I put myself in the coach with her, as she was now of age, and it was time I should give up to her the command of her own property. She had an old maiden cousin living in London, and at her house we settled accounts.

She was looking exceedingly lovely that day, and there was a sort of graceful timidity about her as she took possession of what was her own, and a warm-hearted fervor as she thanked me for my care, which marked that parting interview with sweet and harmonious colors.

The next day I returned to my old house, to carry out the scheme of relaxation, which had suffered a little interruption. But, I know not how it was, time wore heavily with me. I was restless; I was uneasy without cause. My sleep was troubled with evil dreams, my waking thoughts were melancholy. I read a good deal to amuse my mind; but, as if by a power beyond myself, I was driven to choose books of sombre import. I remember Blair's Grave was one of them, and Charles Lamb's pathetic tale of poor Rosamond Gray, another.

The evening of the 7th September was one of the most beautiful I ever beheld. I shall never forget it. There were clouds enough following the sun in his decline to gather up all the scattered rays, but not to impede them; and all the glories of an autumnal sunset were drawing near, when I walked out upon the lawn and seated myself in a garden chair, beneath the old

apple-tree. I had a book in my hand, but I did not look at it; gazing over the sky toward the west, and meditating upon the themes which sunset always suggests to my mind—life, death, and immortality. As I gazed, I saw flying toward me, through the golden air, my old friend Ralph; and I said to myself, "he is coming to take up his nightly rest in the old elm-tree."

I was mistaken, however. The elm-tree was quite at the end of the garden, and he came on toward the lawn. He had something, too, in his bill. I could see it distinctly as he came nearer and nearer, but I could not make out what it was. In my fanciful mood I said to myself, "Perhaps he is coming to feed me in my solitude as his ancestors did with the prophet of old;" and I laughed with that sort of grim feeling which a joke excites when we are gloomy. But he did not come as far as my feet, dropping just on the other side of the haha, which separated the lawn from the garden, with a hop and a bound. Still I could not see what it was he carried in his bill; but I could plainly perceive it glitter in the rays of the setting sun.

My curiosity was somewhat roused, but I did not stir, sitting apathetically and watching him, while he dug a hole to hide his prize. Sometimes I compared him, in my fancy, to a grave-digger, and called him Sexton Ralph; sometimes I tried to picture to myself all the sights and scenes of the places where he gathered his banquets—the murderer's gibbet; the lost traveller's moor-side grave; the church-yard; the lone sea beach. I made myself shudder. I loved him not; and calling him a foul marauder, I went through the little gate to see what he was about.

Divining my intentions, and having as great an abhorrence to the discovery of any of his secrets as a scurvy politician, he hopped toward me, and, after first giving a warning look up in my face with one eye, he bestowed upon my feet sundry pecks with his tremendous bill, which effectually repelled me.

"What is it to me?" I asked; "the bird, like man, is stout in the defense of his unrighteous gains," and then, covering my retreat with a sneer, I went back into the house. I had marked well, however, the exact spot where he had hidden his treasure by a dwarf pear-tree, and I determined, sometime or another, to dig and examine.

Other things occurred to make me forget my resolution. On the following afternoon the schoolmistress came up to say something funny, as she termed it, had happened. She had received a note, she said, from Miss Bell, telling her that she would be down by the coach, and bring her the money that she wanted without fail.

"Now, Lord bless the dear child," said the good lady, "I don't want any money, and I can't tell what she means. Besides, the morning coach has been down these three hours, and she has not come by that, nor by the evening coach last night."

"To-morrow will probably explain, Mrs. Gregory," I answered, without attaching much importance to the subject at the moment; "something has most likely prevented her from coming; and as to the money, she is a liberal-hearted girl, and perhaps thinks you want it, though you don't."

The old lady shook her head with a grave air and went away, and she was hardly gone when I began to

trouble myself about her intelligence, and to the think circumstances more strange than they had appeared at first. "What could have put it in the girl's head," I asked myself, "that old Mrs. Gregory wants money? All the world knows she is very well off. Can any one have deceived her by false intelligence? If so, what can be the object?"

Now the coach passed just on the other side of the hedge, which I have described as within three hundred yards of the eastern end of the garden, and gradually diverging from a straight line toward the village, dropped its passengers for that place at the distance of little more than half a mile from the church. So ringing the bell, I told my old man-servant, Paul, to go out upon the road at the time the coach passed, to stop it, and if he did not find Miss Bell in it, to ask the coachman if he had seen any thing of her.

I did not choose to go myself, for nothing has so absurd an appearance as needless anxiety.

A full half-hour before the time, Paul set out upon his errand, and I betook myself to my seat upon the lawn again, endeavoring to persuade myself that I was not the least anxious in the world. I teased myself with a great number of conjectures, however, and listened with all my ears for the coach.

I heard it coming just as the sun was about a hand's breadth above the horizon; but at that very moment I saw the raven once more winging his flight toward me. I know not how I came to give way to such a folly, but I said in my heart, "It is a bad omen."

I heard the coach stop, but my eyes were upon the bird; and once more I perceived he had something in

his bill—a good deal larger than that which he carried the night before. What strange undefinable link of connection established itself in my mind between that bird and Mary Bell, I can not say; but I felt that there was one; and starting up, I determined I would see what he carried. I cut myself a switch from one of the shrubs, while he lighted at a little distance, and thus armed I crept behind the low trees, hoping to catch him in the act of burying his prize; but he was too cunning for me, espied me in a moment, and coming up with prodigious hops, again attacked my feet.

I would not be baffled now, however, and I applied the switch to his broad back and half-extended wings with more fury than the case deserved. He gave me one tremendous peck even after I had struck him, but another blow of the switch drove him to take wing, and I darted on to the place near which he had lighted. I hunted about among the currant bushes for a moment or two before I could discover any thing worthy of attention; but then what was my horror to behold, protruding from the ground, where he had commenced digging, a long lock of wavy nut-brown hair, some of its curls as glossy as in life, but others dabbled with clay, and, it seemed to me, with blood.

I shook in every limb; and for a moment or two I could not make up my mind to examine further; but at length I stooped down, and drew the ringlet out of the ground. There was human flesh attached to it. It had evidently been torn from a dead body. Poor Mary Bell! I knew no one, but her, who had hair like that. But as I gazed at it with feelings of horror, and grief unspeakable, the raven croaked hoarsely from the tree where

he had perched, as if triumphing in the result of my satisfied curiosity.

I was half inclined to go into the house for a gun, and shoot him.

Just then I heard the sound of quick steps coming across the lawn. Paul was seeking me, but I had given up all hope. I knew he would bring me no good news. Those which he did bring, only served to confirm my worst fears, though he knew not, poor man, that I entertained any. He came up with quite a cheerful air, saying, "Miss Mary is in the village, Sir. Styles says he brought her down last night."

Then he saw what I had in my hand, and exclaimed, "Lord, Sir! that's a lock of hair. Where did it come from?"

"The bird brought it," I answered; and then the remembrance of the night before coming back upon my mind, I added, "quick, Paul, bring a spade. The wretched animal brought something last night, and buried it by that pear-tree. We must see what it is—my heart misgives me, Paul—my heart misgives me."

The old man stood and shook. He saw what was in my mind—perhaps recognized the ringlet. But the next moment he darted away faster than I thought he could run, and, in a moment or two, came back with a spade.

"Here's the place, Sir," he said, standing by the pear-tree, "he's been digging here lately. I know *his* marks quite well."

"Dig away," I said; and he threw out one shovel full. I turned it over with my foot, and something glistened among the earth. It was a broach: a broach I had given to the poor child, some two years before.

"There is no hope left," I said; "she is gone—it is too clear!"

"Miss Mary?" asked the old man, with a tremulous voice.

"Ay," I said; "she has either been murdered, or met with some dreadful accident."

"Let me go for the constable!" cried Paul.

"Stay," I said, "let me think—what lies between the place where the coach stops, and the village?"

"Nothing, Sir, but the road over the common," answered the old man, "and the bit of copse, with the sand-pit in it, and then the road again, and Mr. Levi's house, and then the church—which way did Ralph come, Sir? Did you see him fly?"

I then remembered that, on the previous evening, the bird had come exactly from the direction of the copse he talked of. But this night his course had been more from the village. He might have turned in his flight, however; and at all events it was necessary to do something.

I walked down to the village at once with old Paul, got hold of a magistrate, the constable, and several other men; and taking lanterns, for it was now dark, we sallied forth, pursuing the road from the church toward the place where the coach usually deposited its passengers. Young Dick Cumberland, who had just returned from London by the coach, accompanied us, and his father hobbled after. The young man said he had called upon poor Mary, that morning in London, but was told she had come down by the stage. We all forgot to go and ask at old Mrs. Gregory's; but it would have been no

good, if we had remembered, for she never set foot in those doors again.

We searched the whole road along, and the ground on every side, from the village to the copse, a distance of about half a mile; but we discovered nothing. We then searched the copse and the sand-pit; but there was nothing there. On the edge of the sand-pit, just where the road ran along it, young Cumberland fancied he saw drops of blood, and I traced, what I thought was the print of a woman's foot, but the road was very hard, and many people passed along daily. The drops of blood were pronounced no drops of blood, by the surgeon, on the following morning, and we found the traces of what might or might not be women's feet, going all ways along the road. The next day we searched the whole common, we made all sorts of inquiries in the village, and I myself went to London, and saw poor Mary's old cousin. The result of all was only to render the business more dark. Not a trace of her was discovered in the country, and the cousin could only tell, that she had received a letter which seemed to vex her, and that shortly after, she had said that she must run down to see "poor Mrs. Gregory;" but would return the following day. It appeared, however, that she had gone to her banker's—old friends of her father's and of myself—and had drawn out six hundred pounds.

Every one was sad and puzzled; and it did seem as if the gloomy effect produced upon the whole village would never pass away. Those who thought so, however, were very much mistaken. Every thing passes away. In less than a fortnight people began to think of

other things—except one or two, who could not shake off the weight so easily.

I myself determined I would not rest till I had found out the depth of the mystery. How, was the question. I had no resource but the raven, yet I fancied he might lead me right at last. He was not likely to abandon his fell repasts so long as there was a frail fragment of the soul-abandoned tenement remaining. He, only he, knew where the body lay, and could tell if he would speak; but it was only by watching all his movements, that one could get evidence from him, and to watch them with effect, was very difficult. He had grown very shy since he had received chastisement, seldom lighted in the garden, and kept himself the greater part of each day upon the old tree, which he had chosen for his resting-place for the preceding eighteen or twenty years. He would put down his head and spread his wings, and make his usual hoarse, mournful noise, when he saw any one whom he knew in the garden. But there seemed a sort of cunning consciousness about him, that his flight was observed, which was very curious. Sometimes, when all eyes were off him, he departed from his perch, and would return toward dusk; but he always took a long rambling sort of flight round, before he lighted again, as if to be sure that there was no one watching him. One could almost have fancied that he was in league with the murderers.

In the mean while, as I have said, the excitement created by the first discovery of poor Mary Bell's disappearance died away with every one but myself and two others. One was the parson of the parish, a very excellent, but somewhat dull, man. He had always seemed to

me somewhat selfish—selfish in small things. But his deep persisting interest in the dear lost girl, and in all that concerned her, redeemed his character in my estimation, and we used often to meet and discuss every particular of the event with unavailing efforts to arrive at some clew to the labyrinth of thought into which it had plunged us. The other was young Dick Cumberland. He did not talk of it so much; indeed, he did not willingly follow the topic when it was introduced. A few words, stern, low, and emphatic—a suggestion as to some inquiry that had not been made—a gloomy reference to some past event, were all that he gave utterance to. He did not at all parade his grief—he rather sought to conceal it. But yet his deep melancholy was very evident; it preyed upon—it consumed him. I used to meet him walking alone, with his hands behind his back and his eyes bent down upon the ground, the picture of despair; but his walks were all at a distance from the spot where the terrible event must have happened. He would walk along the public road between my house and the village, or on the other side of the village, and often he would pass those he knew best without even seeming to see them. Sometimes he would stand for an hour with crossed arms, leaning upon a gate and looking dully over into a field. All the purposes of life seemed gone for him, and nothing left but the dull, hard blank of existence.

I felt sincere compassion for the young man, and thought it a duty to do the best I could to give him consolation, and to lure him back, as it were, to resignation. I asked him to dine with me, but he said he was not fit. "I am a sad, gloomy companion, Sir," he answered;

"I should only make you melancholy. However, if you will permit me, I will come in some evening when I feel a little lighter than usual, and sit an hour with you, if you are quite alone."

I tried to reason with him against yielding to repining, and tried both the mere worldly and the religious arguments suited to the case. To the first he listened in silence; but to the second he answered, "I have not been religiously brought up, Sir. I am sorry for it—very sorry for it; but so it is; and I fear that I can not mend now."

Indeed, I had remarked that he was seldom at church—never, indeed, now; nor had he been very regular before. This made me more sorry for him still, and I pressed him to come often.

"We both loved her, Mr. Cumberland," I said, "and we may console each other."

"I did love her—I did love her, indeed!" he answered, as he turned away, and I never saw such a look of anguish as then crossed his face.

Two evenings after—it was just a fortnight after the poor girl disappeared, and it had been a sad, rainy day, going off into a misty drizzle toward the afternoon—they told me that the rain had come into some of the upper chambers of the house, and I went up to see. There had not been much damage done, and when I had examined it I turned to the window and looked out. It was as melancholy an atmosphere as ever I beheld, gray and cold like the cheek of death; but one could see through it distinctly enough, and, indeed, the objects at a distance seemed magnified with hazy, indefinite outlines, like figures in a horrid dream. I could see the dripping trees

in the garden and the hedgerow on the left, and the church steeple, with the part of the nave which rose over a slope in the ground, looked taller than usual, like an enormous giraffe painted upon the leaden background of cloud. I felt chilly at the very aspect of the scene, but yet I stood and gazed, and presently I saw a sort of bustling flapping in the tree where the raven roosted. It had already lost some of its leaves. The moment after, the bird emerged from among the branches, and took his flight directly away from me toward the village. He did not suspect that he was watched, and there was no concealment about him now. Straight on he flew, as if intending to light upon the church steeple; but before he reached it he rose a little, and then descended with a heavy swoop. The spot where he lighted, I knew, must be in the church-yard. It wanted about an hour of sunset, and I resolved to stay and watch, without ever taking my eyes off the place where I had seen him go down. It was the most tiresome task I ever set myself, but still I kept it up with an eager anxiety I can not describe. It seemed to me as if the secret was at length about to be disclosed—as if the clew to the mystery was almost within my grasp, and I stood like a statue, with my eyes fixed upon that one spot for at least twenty minutes. I could see a shade come over the sky—a darker hue pervade the air, and I feared that before he appeared again night would be too far advanced to discover whence he rose distinctly. Just then, however, I saw a black object rise between me and the church, nearer to the building than the spot where he had gone down, and a little to the left of it. I thought it might not be the same bird, and remained watching. It was the raven, though

now the cunning creature took a circuitous flight, whirling away to the right over the cottages before he came home to his tree. The very manœuvre, however, convinced me that he had betrayed his secret—that the place of his ghoul-like banquet was in the church-yard, and very near the church. It is strange we had never thought of seeking for the dead in the place of the dead. I saw him light in his tree, and then went down stairs resolved to go and examine that very night. Before I reached the library, however, some one rung the bell, and I paused upon the lowest step to see who it was. Paul opened the door to young Richard Cumberland, and I beckoned him hastily into the library. There I told him what I had seen, and informed him that I was going at once to the church-yard.

"I will go with you," he said, quite calmly; but then he added, "I think we shall be disappointed. Two Sundays have passed, and if there had been any thing there, the people coming and going must have discovered it."

"True," I answered, "but the bird certainly lighted there, and rose from there. The ground is wet, and we shall be able to trace his feet. Stay, we had better have a lantern."

"We can get one at my father's," he replied, in a dull tone, "it would make the people stare to see us walking along the road with a light."

What he said was true, and only staying to put on my great coat, I set out upon our gloomy business. He walked by my side with a heavy, firm tread, and nothing but his deep silence betrayed the agitation I knew he must feel, till we were near his father's house, and then, somewhat to my consternation, he gave a short, low laugh,

apparently at something passing in his own thoughts. I feared his brain must be turned with the bitter grief he had endured, and doubted whether it was wise to go on with him. But there were one or two houses within call of the church-yard, and I am not accustomed to give way to fear.

At his father's door we stopped, and I remained without while he went in for a lantern. He staid long, I thought, but at length he came forth with the light in his hand. I could not see his face, but he held the lantern quite steadily.

"Now, let me lead," said I; "for I marked the spot where the bird lighted and where it rose so accurately, that I am certain we shall find marks of him."

"Lead on!" he answered.

Entering the little side door next his father's house, we crossed toward the old yew-trees, and about twenty yards before we reached them I stopped, saying, "He came down near here."

Dick Cumberland held down the lantern; but at first we could see nothing but the glistening of the light upon the little plashy path which led to the gate of the old crypt, or "the vaults," as it was called. A moment after, however, I caught sight of the broad marks of the raven's feet, and we traced them on—on up the path, right to the iron grate I have mentioned. His hand shook enough now; but we came to nothing as yet, such as I expected to find. I was truly sorry for him.

"Hold up the light," I said, "let us look in."

He held it up, and slowly the rays penetrated the gloom as I gazed between the bars. There was nothing to be seen within, however, but the mouldering coffins,

and the tatters of crimson velvet and gold lace with the dust of years upon them.

I then took the lantern from his hand to ascertain more exactly in which direction the last footmarks of the bird had turned. But now came a new discovery. The gate ended with a bar below, into which the other perpendicular bars were let, and, at the corner where the irons hinged upon the stone door-post, I perceived a little pile of earth dug out, and numerous traces of the bird's feet. It was clear he had enlarged the aperture beneath the door, so as to make his way into the vault.

"We have found it out at last," I cried, pointing out to him the circumstances I had remarked.

"You have, indeed!" he answered, in a tone that made me instantly look up in his face. He was standing with his arms crossed upon his chest, his eyes fixed upon the spot at which I had been looking, and an expression on his countenance full of strange, stern, gloomy wonder. Suddenly he gave a start, took the light out of my hand, and bent down his head almost to the little hillock caused by the bird's excavation.

"I will trace this strange thing to an end," I said, "we must see what the vault contains."

"Of course," he answered, raising himself and speaking quite in a different tone, "we must see all."

"Well, let us get the keys from your father," I said.

"I have got the keys with me," replied the young man; "though I do not visit the church very much with the rest, I sometimes visit it alone—especially lately."

As he spoke he put his hand in his pocket, and pulled out the large bunch of church-keys. He found the key of the grate in a moment—it was a very remark-

able old key, with a filigree handle—and put it in the lock. He could not turn it, however, and I turned it for him. I then took a step or two into the crypt, and he followed with the lantern, drawing to the grated door behind us.

"There is no need of shutting the gate," I said; but he answered with a bitter scoff. "The dead can not hurt you."

A sort of chilly sensation came over me as he spoke, and as his voice vibrated along among the arches, with coffins and mouldering bones all around us.

I felt ashamed of my own feelings; but as I went forward, thoughts began to cross my mind, inquiries to present themselves, suggesting motives for fear more reasonable, more tangible. But we are very cunning when we are afraid, and I knew that it was vain—nay, might be dangerous to show alarm, though ever and anon I asked myself, "If she has been brought here, who can have brought her?"

Suddenly, when we had gone about a dozen steps, his hollow voice said, "Look to the left!" and turning my eyes in that direction, I beheld what I had been so long seeking. The lifeless body of poor Mary Bell was lying stretched out by the side of three coffins piled one on the other, so that the corpse was hidden from the grate.

Some pains seem to have been taken to compose her limbs. Her arms were calmly resting by her side, her garments decently arranged. But oh, her face! The foul bird had been at those pretty features—but I dare not think of it. I shuddered as I gazed, and stole a glance to my companion's face. His teeth were firm set together;

and the tatters of crimson velvet and gold lace with the dust of years upon them.

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his brow knitted up; his eyes almost starting from his head—fixed, as if immovably upon that dead form.

"Let us go," I said, as calmly as I could, "let us go. We know all now;" and I was turning toward the grate again, when he stretched forth his powerful arm, and pushed me back.

"Sit down there," he said, in a fierce tone, pointing to a coffin lying near. "Sit down there. You do not know all, but you soon shall."

I hesitated for an instant, thinking that, perhaps, I might spring past him. But he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a pistol, repeating the words, "Sit down there! Don't drive me to any more!"

I seated myself where he pointed; and he himself continued standing for a moment or two, gazing sternly at the ground in silence. His lips moved, indeed, but he uttered no word. Then he rolled his eyes round, as if in search of something, and spying an old trestle, from which some coffin had been removed, he leaned, rather than sat upon it, fixing his eyes upon my face.

"Don't move," he said, "or I will shoot you, and I would rather not;" but he cocked the pistol as he spoke.

Then came a long gloomy pause, during which he never took his eyes off me, and at length, with a sort of convulsive gaze, he said, "I killed her! You have divined that, I suppose."

"How could I divine so terrible a thing?" I asked; "I thought you loved her—I thought you mourned for her."

"Ay, I loved her," he answered, in a tone the saddest, the most plaintive, that ever met my ear. "Heaven

knows how I loved her—hell knows how I loved her—mourned for her, did you say? Who has mourned like me? But I killed her, old man, notwithstanding."

"It was an act of madness," I answered, "surely, it was madness."

"Madness!" he said, in a musing tone, "madness!" and then he laughed aloud, adding, "such madness as they kill dogs for. Sit down!—don't move!—I'm mad now; but I won't hurt you, if you don't move. But I'm not mad either. It's all nonsense—it's all a lie! I'm not mad now! I was not mad then. It was the devil then, and it's the same fiend now. I lured her down cunningly, for I thought she had gone after that young lad, and my brain was all in a flame about it. I told her that Mrs. Gregory was suddenly pressed hard for money. I knew that would bring her; but that was not like madness, was it?"

"Then it was not her money you sought to take?" I asked.

He sat for a moment or two glaring at me by the light of the lantern; and then answered slowly, "I don't know what I sought—don't know what I intended. Men put the whip into the hand of Fate and leave him to flog them on. No, no. It was not her money. But she had given me cold words, and I swore a great oath that she should never be another man's wife. Yet, if she had but been a little gentle with me, when I met her down there by the sand-pit; if she had only given me any hope; if she had not snatched away her hand as if it touched a snake, I should not have done what I did—or what I dreamed of either."

A cold shudder passed over me; but as he seemed more calm, I kept silence, in order to let him proceed

quietly. He did not say much more, however, and what he did say was broken and somewhat incoherent.

"It's not the first time I've shed blood," he said, "but I never shed a woman's blood before. Yet the horror did not last more than a minute or two. It went away and left me. Mad! Why, I was as sane as you are. Didn't I play my part well? When it was night I brought her here and then walked to London; and then came down again; and searched with the rest of you. But it was when things began to get still that the fit came back upon me, and night and day it has been all the same ever since. I slept like a stone the two first nights; but I have never slept since. I'm not going to be hanged, though; never you think it. Hark! wasn't that a step? The old man will be here in a minute; he'll come after the lantern. Here, you take it to him. Now, Mary—"

I stretched out my arm to take the light from him; but before I could reach it, he raised his hand to his head, and I heard a loud report. I could just see him reel, for an instant, and then the lantern fell and the light was extinguished. The moment after came a sound of staggering and falling, and when I groped my way to the grated door of the vault, my hands were dipped in a wet warm pool that had gathered upon one of the coffins. Shaking with horror, I at length reached the outer air, and paused a single instant to draw a free breath. The mist had cleared away—the clouds were nearly gone; and the calm stars were shining out in the tranquil heavens.

I soon gave the alarm, and calling neighbors to my

aid, re-entered that dismal place of death and crime. We found him, with the pistol still firmly clasped in his hand, lying bent as he had fallen, near the feet of the poor girl he had murdered, with his head resting upon the last abode of one who had gone long before him to the place of final account. May God have mercy upon all!

THE GOVERNOR'S LADY

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THERE was a young and gentle lady reading in a large old-fashioned room, well-furnished with China vases, and small pictures, and Louis Quatorze clocks, and sundry monsters in earthenware, and black wood, and ivory, from China, and Ceylon, and Japan. She was very fair to look upon, with white, even teeth, and rosy lips, with a peculiar liquid translucency of eye which none but Lawrence could transfer to canvas, and he had done it in her case marvellously well. Her form was full of easy and natural grace, and it was very delicate in its symmetry; but it was not sylph-like, as poets will have their beauties; which, as sylphs are supposed to be of air, I imagine must mean thin. Her dress had something of negligence in it, and so had her hair: — mind, I say negligence, not neglect. It was all easy, and the ringlets and large curls, though suffered to mingle in some confusion, were as glossy and bright as if the fingers of a dozen maids had been brushing them all day. Perhaps

that little air of negligence might be altogether accidental—perhaps a little savoring of design, for she had a strong love for the picturesque, and knew that it became her. There might be the least possible touch of coquetry in it, for it can not be said that she altogether disliked admiration, though she had not that thirsty fondness for it which occasionally mars many bright perfections. Her name was Eleanor; but she called herself Ellen, and there might be a little affectation in that too.

Was she really reading? Yes: she read a line or two, now and then, and played with one dark brown curl upon her cheek, bringing gleams of gold upon it as she wound it round her delicate fingers. But she meditated between whiles, and more than once turned her eyes toward the windows, and gazed out, and sighed.

There was a world of poetry in her young heart, and that poetry had found a voice in many a little piece which had found its way, by one means or another, to the public, bringing that applause which is most surely found when it is least sought. Hers was the poetry of feeling, however—which is almost always sure to wake an echo—and it would be written. Not that she valued it much, or cared for it when it was done, for she would often cast it from her as soon as it was upon the paper, or leave it where careless servants would sweep it away to light fires with.

And now some such imaginations were busy within her, clothing themselves in words, and, after she had read, and pondered, and gazed forth for some time, she drew the inkstand near and wrote. Let us look over her shoulder and read the words. They were these:

TO HIM.

The summer days are passing, love,
The air has lost it balm,
The lingering flowers fold up too soon
Their leaves in slumbers calm.

The autumn's yellow hand has touched
The leaves upon the tree,
And wizard evening sails too soon
Across the silent sea.

Whate'er I hear—whate'er I see,
Tells to the eye and ear
That this year's life is well-night spent,
That winter's death is near.

And thus my hours are fleeting love,
Ere thou return'st again;
And oft I look, and oft I sigh,
But look and sigh in vain.

Oh come before the autumn comes
Its blighting dews to shed;
Oh come before the winter pours
Its snows upon my head!

Oh come before remembrance flies
From thine inconstant breast;
Lest chill forgetfulness should freeze
The warm dove in her nest.

To him! To whom! Hark! there are carriage wheels. He is near—it must be, and she knows it. The color flutters in her cheek like the shifting lights of the northern aurora. Now deadly pale; now rosy as the morn. There are steps on the stairs: the door is opened, and two men in travellers' guise appear. One is young and very like her, the other a few years older. The one she kisses fondly, and calls him brother; but she is folded in

the arms of the other, and clings to his breast in silence. Is that the poet's love?

It is. Is he not handsome?

Yes—it can not be denied. He is handsome, finely formed—one can not find a fault with a feature or a limb; but yet there is a certain coarseness, more in the expression than aught else. Can I call it an animal look? Not exactly: the fineness of the features forbids that. But still the sensual stamps its seal, as firmly as the intellectual or the spiritual; and though that man may be the poet's love—ay, and love the poet—he is no poet himself. There is too much clay in the image, even to represent a god. Still he is fond—very fond. See how he presses her to his heart, how he kisses those rich lips, how he gazes into her eyes, how he holds her a little from him to drink in the nectar of her looks. And he tells her she is lovelier than ever—and dearer too; and that he has come back never to part from her more, to take her with him to the fair but distant island where he now plays the ruler with deputed sway. He accounts for his long absence too by assuring her, that he could not quit the government bestowed upon him by his sovereign the moment he had received it, or he would have flown to her at once; and he appeals to her brother, if it had been possible.

Oh yes, he loves her, there is no doubt of it—as well as he can love any thing. And she will make her idol of him; and, from the garden of fancy and the treasury of imagination, she will take some flowers and brilliant gems to decorate him, and will offer him sacrifice—well for her if the sacrifice be not her whole happiness.

And what says the brother? Oh, he vouches for all

his friend affirms. He is one of those soft, easy, worldly beings, who judges leniently of wordly faults, sees no great harm in a number of things that men of sterner thought or finer feeling would condemn—doubts not in the least that his sister will be quite happy with the husband that God has given her, if she will wisely shut her eyes to a few little errors, as other good wives do; and can not in the least conceive the purity of her heart or the delicacy of her character, nor that love can condemn as well as warm. Well, let us leave them alone: their affairs are small concern of ours—let us leave them to be married, and sail away before them to a distant shore where that man rules as Governor a fair colony of Great Britain—ay, and rules it well, admirably well; for he is not without talents; and it is a certain and sad fact that in the hard and mechanical state of society in which we live, the men who have the least delicacy of sentiment and tenderness of feelings, or who have strong powers to overrule them, are those who govern other men most safely. You would not put a wheel of pasteboard into a clock of cast iron, would you?

Well, there, on that high white rock at the western end of the town stands a fine and imposing building called the Castle. The square and the round towers and the walls and battlements give it the aspect of a place of strength; and it was so once, but is so no longer. Its fortifications are not worth half an hour's siege to modern art—unavailable altogether, as the fierce and fiery passions which once raged here and still linger are impotent in the presence of new powers and combinations. But how man has improved the place for beauty if he has neglected it for defense. Those ramparts and bastions

looking down on the blue sea and haloed in the high air with the golden radiance of the finest of climates, are but terraced gardens where the orange and the vine, the myrtle and the pomegranate, flourish in rich luxuriance and cast perfume and beauty on the wind. Behind, there lies many a winding walk and pleasant grove as the gardens climb the mountain, and wider and wider views extend of the glittering waves, and gem-like islands, and fairy-like distant dreams of coasts and headlands.

Oh it is a very lovely spot—a spot just fit for a young bride full of happy hopes and sweet sensations, and bright, false, foolish expectations. But that beautiful creature wandering there, is she a bride? Nay, not so. There is nothing bride-like in her look and air—nothing in the dark moody downcast eye—nothing in the pale unvarying olive of her cheek. No fluttering blush, no varying light and shade of expression, is there: none of the sunshine of the May of life: none of the changeful gleam and shadow of its April. And yet she is very young. Not twenty summers even have passed over that broad brow. But if we may trust the black eye when it is raised, and the flashes it gives forth, young as she is, there is within her bosom maturity of passion. Her hand, too, covered with jeweled rings, is now clenched tight as if grasping a hard purpose, now relaxed as if some tenderer feelings stole across her heart. And now she gazes toward the Castle—the Government house it is called—and as she sees it gleaming white between those two tall cypresses, memories flow over her soul like deep waters. That house has been the tomb of her hopes and of her happiness, and the cypress and the willow are but emblems of her fate. There she lived and reigned almost

as a queen for a brief fifteen months, fondled, petted, a plaything, a spoiled child. Little did her seducer think that there were other, stronger feelings in her breast than in his own—feelings dangerous in their power. At length he bethought him that he had a promised bride in England, a bride fair, virtuous, wealthy, well allied; and he set out on pressing business, as he told his lovely toy, leaving a lawyer and a friend *to make an arrangement* with his cast-off mistress. They found that they had undertaken a terrible task; but with time and argument, and much cajolery, they succeeded to a certain degree—at least, so they thought. They bought her a small pretty cottage, a mile or two distant: they settled on her a small estate—sufficient for her small wants—and they exacted of her that she was never again to go near the Government House, nor to show any recognition of the Governor. They thought they had done magnificently, that they had given her all that she could possibly desire. But they forgot love, and hope, and happiness; and —perhaps revenge. Did she keep her promise, implied if not uttered. Why should she keep any promise? Had not all promises been broken with her? She went almost daily to wander in the gardens of the Castle, to hang round the building, to haunt like a ghost the scenes of past joy. She made no concealment of it! She went at mid-day—at morning—at evening. It is a bad thing to take away hope from any one, for it takes away fear. The servants carried the intelligence to the advocate, and he came up and found her there, and tried to argue with her, mingling reproaches with reasons, and threats with reproaches. But the sadness and the heaviness passed away in an instant: the eye flashed, the nostril expanded, the brow became dark and cloudy.

"Silence, advocate!" she cried, "you can do nothing to me that I dread. I spit upon you and your menaces. Now mark me: the threshold of that door I have never passed since I was driven forth from my house—ay mine, mine, pander! It was mine by every tie between heart and heart—by every tie that God will hold holy. I have never passed the door since that day. But if I hear one threat from you or any other, I will enter those walls—I will take possession of my home again—I will claim all that is mine; and let me see who will dare to dispossess me. Away with you, man, and do not stand gaping there. You make tigers of us, and then wonder that we rend you!"

"But Lilla—" said the advocate.

"Away!" she answered with a look of bitter contempt, "not a word more;" and leaving him she pursued her walk to the very doors of the Castle.

The poor advocate was sorely puzzled: he knew not what to do or how to act. But the next packet took a letter for him to his Excellency the Governor, which somewhat troubled the joy of his approaching nuptials. There was no resource but to prolong his wedding tour a little, and send forward his good, kind, complaisant brother-in-law and secretary to clear the ground, before he brought his bride home to his bright island.

And now the beautiful Lilla is in those gardens and groves once more; but yesterday evening as the sun was setting and when, amidst the warm light cast around, the sea looked like a sapphire set in gold, a white sail came on toward the island, and by the star-light reached the port below. And now the woman's figure flitting among the orange-trees, is seen from the windows and

the good-humored easy Henry Mansell is speedily walking toward her—with a somewhat beating heart, it must be confessed; for the stolidest minds have instincts.

She knew him and she liked him well; and would rather have had any one else to deal with on hard subjects. The sight of him agitated her; did not shake her resolves; but shook her frame. He had been always kind and courteous to her in other days, had treated her with decent respect, and shown her small attentions. She paused then to take breath and to consider—to arrange her plans, determine upon her conduct. She paused—but she did not avoid him.

"Lilla, Lilla!" said Henry, in a tone of reproach, "I did not expect to find you here."

"Why not?" asked Lilla, with a melancholy smile.

"Because you promised you would not come near the house again," he answered.

"I did not promise," she replied, "but even if I had, why should my promise be more binding than other people's?"

"Oh, but you know Lilla," he said, "young men always make all sorts of promises to ladies situated as you were, without their meaning any thing."

"Do they?" answered Lilla, with another smile—her smiles were very terrible, "I did not know it. I wish I had known it before, Henry."

"But now listen to me, there's a dear girl," said Henry, in his most coaxing manner, "you were always kind and good hearted, and I am sure you would not wish to make mischief. Now his Excellency has married my sister, you know, and—"

"His Excellency!" said Lilla, with a sneer so bitter

curling her lip, that it seemed to Henry Mansell as if she had stung him. "And so, he has married your sister," she said, after thinking for a moment gloomily, "poor thing! I am sorry for her."

"Why? why so?" demanded Henry, somewhat alarmed.

"Because I should think she would not like a husband who makes promises which mean nothing," replied the girl, with a shrewd, meaning look.

"Well, well; but this is all nonsense," answered Henry, with more firmness of tone. "He is married. That is the end of it. My sister will be here in a few days. Now the question is, do you wish to make her unhappy. If you are the girl I believe you to be, you do not. Him you may be angry with, and have good cause; but you have no cause to wish my poor sister unhappy."

"I do not—I will not," she replied, in a calm, quiet tone, though she had turned deadly pale while he spoke.

"I thought so," said the other, in a joyful tone. "Then, dear Lilla, the only way to do will be for you to have the pretty little villa on the other side of the island, and give up this cottage to me. I can not think why those two fools placed you there."

"Because I would have none other, Mr. Mansell," she replied, and then added very slowly and deliberately, "and will have none other."

"Then you will make my sister unhappy," said Mansell, bitterly.

"Why so?" she asked, "she need never know who or what I am, or what I have been. From me she shall never know. I have promised, and that promise I will keep, never to seem to recognize the villain who—who is now your sister's husband."

"Then why should you wish to stay here?" he asked, thinking the question would puzzle her; but she answered at once:

"Because I do wish to make him unhappy. Each time he sees me in his ride or walk, there will be fear in his heart and remorse in his breast. My eye will lash him, my look reproach him, though my tongue be mute and my hand still. Talk not to me of going hence, Henry Mansell. Here I am, and here I will be daily. So long as no one tries to stop me or to interfere with me, I will be silent and discreet. The moment any one does, I will speak in a voice that shall reach within the rosy curtains of your sister's wedding-chamber, and poison her repose for ever. She shall then know that her husband is a perjurer and villain."

"But what will she think, if she sees you constantly flitting about here like a shadow?" asked the young man, at his wits' end.

"Think what she likes," said Lilla, sternly. "See you to that. Tell any tale you like. I will not contradict it. He will help you. He is never embarrassed for a lie."

She looked at him with a magnificent air of disdain as she turned away and left him.

"She has got the advantage, and she understands it," thought Henry, gazing after her. "She will torment the poor fellow's soul out; or force him to buy her off at an enormous sacrifice."

It is a curious fact that mere worldly people can never transport themselves out of themselves; can make no allowance for—have no comprehension of passion, feeling, or even the higher ranges of intellectual consciousnesses. They are merely perceptive machines with a very limited

object-glass. No thought had he of all the powerful sensations that were working in that poor girl's breast as she stood there talking with him—sensations that often nearly bore her away on the whirlwind of passion in the midst of her assumed calmness—sensations only the more intense for the compression to which the strong will subjected them. He had no thought of them, and but little consciousness of coming danger. He did indeed get a vague notion that she was very angry, and feel a little doubt, as he expressed it to himself, of what she would do next. But it was but as a naturalist observing an insect through a microscope, who feels the instrument shaken by an earthquake and yet goes on peering at his flea, with one eye.

"I'll tell him he must give her a thousand pounds and get rid of her," he thought, and walked back to the Castle.

And now, forward three days. The cannon thundered; the ship dropped her anchor; the boat manned with the lusty rowers skimmed on toward the shore. Shout and hurrah and sounding music welcomed the Governor and his fair lady, and gratulating friends and bowing dependents escorted them up to their princely residence. Oh, how cold those sounds made one poor heart in that island; but it was with the coldness of that black rock which a spark kindles into fire. But the bright and beautiful bride went on unconscious that her happiness was the misery of another. The soul of the young poet seemed lighted up by her joy; it shone upon her face; it beamed in her smile; it sparkled in her words; and every one was charmed, and forgot that there was such a being as Lilla on earth. There was a fête, and rejoicings, and gay company, and visits endless to receive. All was very gay and very bright; but it was when

these scenes closed, and when, with the chosen of her heart, she could go forth alone to gaze upon the beauty of the sunset, and the sweet majesty of the sea, and the glory of rock and mountain, that the poet dreamed of real happiness.

At first she was contented with the terrace before the Castle, where a useless sentry at each end seemed placed to guard the lovely prospect from the rampart for her especial use. There he and she walked the whole of their first leisure evening, seeing the sun slowly sinking down to the verge of ocean.

"Let us go, my love, into those beautiful groves behind," she said, as the last bright spot sank beneath the sea; "I love to rest a little in the purple light which lingers amidst the trees after the summer day has closed. It is to me like the memory of joy."

But he told her that in that climate the evening dews were dangerous to those not steeled against them by early habit, and he must guard his flower from all noxious things.

The next day she again proposed a walk in the groves; but he said it was sultry there in the heat; and he was busy. He would ride with her in the evening to a very lovely scene a few miles distant. She waited for the evening patiently, and through several of the warmer hours of the day her voice might be heard singing sweet songs of her own loved distant land. Many an ear that listened thought them charming and full of warm happiness, but there was one that caught the sounds, and to it they were as poison.

The evening came; the horses were brought round, and the young wife and the gay husband went forth to-

gether. Her looks were all joyful exhilaration; but as they passed out along the road skirting the groves, the servants who followed saw his eye roam furtively, anxiously around.

By the time they returned he had recovered his self-possession, and she was radiant with the exercise and with the beauty of the ride. But as they came near the groves, a female figure of transcendent beauty and grace, richly habited, and with her black hair decked with pins and coins, suddenly crossed their path and gazed full in the lady's face. That face was bright with happiness, and there is nothing so sad as happiness to the sight of the unhappy. A look of wildness—almost of madness crossed the face of Lilla, and the poet turned suddenly toward her husband. He was as pale as death. But he said nothing; the figure disappeared, and they rode on.

"Who could that be, love," asked the lady, after a moment's troubled silence—troubled she knew not why.

"Some woman of the country," he answered, carelessly; "they all deck themselves out in that fantastic fashion. Did you remark the gold coins in her hair? Ha, ha, ha! Was ever any thing so absurd?"

"I delight in costume," answered his bride, "it is the great want of England in a picturesque point of view that we have no characteristic dress. Had I been born in a country where a peculiar garb had descended to us from our ancestors, I would not abandon it for all the milliners of London or of Paris."

"You are a dear little enthusiast," answered her husband; and the first trial over, he thought he could bear the rest quietly enough.

But that figure seemed to haunt their walks and rides

and drives. They seldom went out without seeing it; and the wife's curiosity became somewhat excited—it was curiosity, nothing more, though she could not but observe that whenever they saw it a shade, as it were, came upon her husband's face—a look of hesitancy—of alarm; that his manner was abstracted, strange, unnerved. She questioned one of the attendants; but he was discreet. She was a lady, he said, who lived in a small house near, and who had for years enjoyed the privilege of walking in the gardens and the groves, so that nobody ever interrupted her. She was a moody sort of person, he said; but a very good lady.

"For years!" rejoined his mistress, "she seems still quite young."

"Oh yes, from her childhood, I should have said, Madam," he replied, "she was born hard by."

And there he spoke the truth. She was born hard by; and those were the scenes of her innocent childhood and of her young affections, and of her guilty happiness as well as of her desertion, and sorrow, and despair. The chains that bind us to particular spots of earth are sometimes of gold and sometimes of iron; and on the limbs of her spirit there were both.

The man's intentions were to quiet doubt and still inquiry, for he knew her and her history quite well. He was a skillful diplomatist in his way also; but he knew not nor comprehended the heart of her to whom he spoke, and he failed of his purpose—nay, not only failed, but effected quite the reverse. His words excited interest and sympathy. Oh, what a strange thing is imagination! how it bends itself to every other faculty—for it, too, is a faculty—of the human mind—a guide, a light, a myste-

rious star, shining before reason, and leading us to fate!

The Governor's lady sat and meditated. The harp and the voice were silent the greater part of that day. She was thinking of the beautiful girl with the dark black eyes, and the gold-spangled hair, and the graceful form. She was thinking of the sad and moody aspect of the solitary life she seemed to lead. Why should she be so sad? Why should she be solitary? Such a face and form were sure to attract the eyes and win the society of youth. Why was she not surrounded by the crowd of gay suitors and of merry companions? Why was she so lonely and so woe-begone? She must have loved and been disappointed—perhaps deserted, too—deserted by him whom she had loved and trusted—ah, that sweet young bride little knew how far.

"I will go and see her," she thought; "I will try to console and cheer her."

Then came a train of sweet and happy thoughts, for she was one of those who would make their happiness in giving it to others; but, suddenly, as a dark cold mist will sometimes rise from the bosom of the ocean in the midst of the sunniest summer's day, a memory of her husband's look and manner, whenever the figure of Lilla had crossed them, came up before her with a painful, perplexing sensation.

She was not suspicious—oh, not in the least. She suspected nothing, even then. There was a doubt that her husband might know something to the discredit of that beautiful girl—that he might not like her—might not esteem her; but that was all.

She would try him, she thought. The subject of Lilla's appearance had never been mentioned between them but once. For some reason, unaccountable to herself, she had dropped it, and he had never approached it again. It is a dangerous thing between husband and wife to have an avoided subject. She felt a reluctance to approach it; but she sincerely pitied the poor forlorn girl, and that day, at dinner, she forced herself to speak and ask more about her. There were several servants in the room; and her husband's cheek turned for a moment fiery red and then white. "Avoid her, my love," he said at length, in a harsh, altered tone. "I do not wish you to know aught of her."

If suspicion ever entered her mind, it was then. His look, his manner was so changed; and, besides, a little deceit stood apparent. When first they had encountered her, he had merely said, in answer to her inquiry, that she was "some woman of the country," as if he knew nothing more; but now his words implied that he did know more, and much.

But woman's heart soon finds excuses for those they love. She thought that he might know things he had not liked to shock her ear by telling, or that he had learned more since he first spoke; and again she was satisfied. Neither did she at all feel inclined to rebel against his expressed wishes. She gave up all thought of going to see the object of her sympathy. He had spoken, and that was enough. But her words had alarmed the Governor. Fear is always tyrannical—prompting to tyranny, I mean; and the next day he sent a fierce and imperious message to her he had betrayed and injured, forbidding her ever to be seen in the gardens or the

groves again; and telling her that the first time she was seen there it should be the last. He knew how much force vagueness adds to a threat; but still he had resolved to be as good as his word, and if she did not obey, to have her forcibly carried from the island. He would bear the infliction of her sight no longer. She was a terror to him—and who can live a life in terror?

Lilla heard the message to an end in silence—silence of countenance as well as voice. A slight shade indeed came over her face, but her broad brow did not contract; her lip quivered not; and she only answered, "Well, well. So be it."

The messenger reported her words and her demeanor. For a week she was no more seen near the castle. The Governor and his emissary thought she was tamed. He began to feel cheerful again—quite gay and happy. He had not been married three months—he had not had time to grow tired of his beautiful young bride. Nay, he loved her, as I have said, as well as he could love any thing. He was a very happy man.

Some troublesome business, however, at the end of that time called him to a distance—as far as the other end of the island. He set out early in the day, and was to return the next day before nightfall. Oh how fondly his bright lady gazed at him as he rode away upon his handsome horse followed by a glittering train. She thought of him and him alone for the next hour, and then she went forth with her maid in the groves so often mentioned. They had not gone far, when they met Lilla, but she merely bowed her head as she passed by. The lady bowed hers in return with a gentle smile, speaking the kindly feelings of her heart; and at that smile Lilla

turned deadly pale. But as she went on she set her white teeth firmly together and strangled emotions that I must not pause to tell.

The 'day passed heavily with the Governor's Lady. Her poetry did not stand her friend. She could not write; she could not read; she could only think of her beloved husband, and long for his return. The day was very sultry, like one of those on which earthquakes happen: not a breath of air was stirring, and there was a thirsty dryness in the atmosphere which made the very flowers in the shade hang their heads. She lay languidly on the sofa, gazing from the window, turned from the sun, upon the waves lighted by his beams, and watched the light skiffs with their painted sides as they flitted about the bay, and longed for swiftness and freedom like theirs to follow on the track where the loved one had gone.

At length the sun sunk behind the hills to the west. There were still other hours of day and twilight, but the burning beams were off the groves and gardens. The sea-breeze was springing up; and the birds, silent in the intense heat of the middle day, were beginning to break out into evening song.

She fancied that she should find refreshment in a walk both for body and mind, and throwing a light veil over her head, she went out into the garden behind the house. It was a pleasant place, laid out by some man of Italian tastes in days long ago, with vases and urns and a fountain here and there, casting up clear water brought from the mountains, and there were aloes, strange harsh-looking picturesque things, and several of the aremosa and acacia tribe, and a cypress or two here and there. It was completely in shadow, but there was the

bright blue sky filled with light above—like the calm heaven of hope canopying the shady world of thought.

She passed unnoticed through the stone court, as it was called, into that garden, and wandered up the first open walk, and then mounted a flight of steps leading to a higher terrace; and one or two turns she took, musing with thoughts sweeter than those of the morning. "One day has gone," she said to herself, "to-morrow he will return."

When she turned the third time there was another figure in the broad walk just circling round the fountain that rose in the midst. It was that of Lilla, dressed more plainly than usual, with a basket covered over with vine leaves in her hand.

The lady hesitated for a moment, with her husband's words ringing in the ear of memory. But then she thought, "I must not pain her by too apparently avoiding her. I will just pass her by, saluting her as I go."

But Lilla stopped when they came near each other, and in a low sweet voice said, "Lady."

The wife bent her head, and said some gentle word in return.

"I have brought you some fruit, madam," said Lilla, uncovering the basket, "such as your garden can not afford, fine as it is. There are some fruits love the shelter of the cottage wall better than that of the castle's ramparts. These peaches, for instance. It is a rare fruit in this island, but no land can show finer than these."

"They are very beautiful," replied the lady; "and I thank you much. But, indeed," she added, with a feeling she could not account for, "I must not stay with you. My husband warned me—warned me, till I was

better acquainted with this country to avoid all strange acquaintances."

She would not pain her by telling her that against her especially had she been warned, and yet Lilla stood exactly in the path, and she could not easily pass her.

But the other caught the full meaning at a word, and for an instant her brow darkened and her eye flashed. Then all was calm again, and she answered sorrowfully, "Ay, the happy fly the unhappy: the sorrowful are hateful in the sight of the joyful and fortunate."

"Nay, indeed," said the wife, "such is not my nature. I saw—I thought you were unhappy, and long ago I would have come to inquire if I could have given you comfort; but—"

"But you were forbidden!" said Lilla, slowly. "Unhappy! I am unhappy, lady. I am sick with a disease that nothing can cure, and in which none will give me help."

"Indeed!" cried the lady, "that is cruel.—What is it affects you?"

"Listen," said Lilla. "Some time ago, I was stung by a serpent. For a short time the effect was very strange. It seemed to raise me up to heaven with wild joy and delirious excitement. But soon, the poison had a different effect. I lost hope, happiness, was plunged into a black and gloomy melancholy, so that people have almost thought me mad. There is no telling you the dark and despairing feelings that have since taken possession of my heart. I have no trust, no expectation, no hope in any thing: a raging thirst consumes me, and I can only find peace in wandering in lone places where the shade is sombre as my thoughts."

"I am indeed very sorry for you," replied the lady. "It is a strange case. I never heard of such; I trust you will be able to find a cure in time. But indeed I must now go in."

"Because he told you," said Lilla, still standing in the way. "He fears me—perhaps he, too, thinks me mad. But indeed he is mistaken. I would do you good, not harm you; and I came into this garden to warn you against the snake that bit me—he crawls about this place—to deliver you from him. But he is not here now. You are thirsty; I see your lips are parched. Take one of these peaches."

"Nay, I am only agitated. Your words seem strange," said the lady. "I could almost fancy you are speaking allegories."

"Not so, not so," replied Lilla, with a laugh. "All hard facts, believe me. But you, too, are frightened at me—you, too, believe me mad; and you will not even take a peach offered you by the poor sorrowful girl. Do you think they are poisoned? Nay, I will convince you. You take the one half—I the other. In here is a knife—a silver knife made in your own land, and given me by a false-hearted man as fair as your own husband. Yet part the peach yourself—for there is a story I have somewhere read of a Prince of the Medici who slew his brother with a knife poisoned on one side and pure on the other. Take it, and give me which half you choose."

"But why should I do so when I am not thirsty?" replied the lady.

"Because I wish to be your sister," answered Lilla, "and if we part this fruit and eat it, according to the belief of my land, we shall be sisters in one sense, at

least. In the misfortunes that may befall us, there will be a link of sympathy between us that will end but with the grave—not even then, perhaps."

"Well," answered the lady, "I do not mind. I have no fear. I have done naught to injure you. On the contrary, I have felt compassion and sympathy even for sorrows I did not know, and if this fruit now make it greater, so let it be."

As she spoke she divided the fruit with the knife, and proffered her one half. Lilla took it and ate, and the fair girl with whom she spoke raised the other half to her lips also. A wavering came upon Lilla's face—a look of fear—of agony—and she suddenly stretched forth her hand. But it was too late. The wife had eaten.

The gesture did not escape her eye, however—nor the look of hesitation. "What have you done?" she said, in a low, solemn tone.

"We are sisters indeed!" answered Lilla, raising her hand high, with all hesitation gone. But I have done you good, not evil; I delivered you from agonies like mine. Your time would have come as surely as mine has come. Now it will never come. We are sisters indeed, in death. A few months more and he would have betrayed—neglected—abandoned."

"Hush, hush!" cried the wife. "Wretched girl, you turn pale—your eyes roll—what have you done? What do I feel—I am—I am—"

"Dying!" said Lilla. "We are sisters in death, I told you. Now let him come—let him come!"

She sank slowly down while she spoke, and then murmured as she leaned her head against the pedestal

of an urn, "He told me, the next time I appeared here again, should be the last. It is the last—it is the last!"

Heaven send the lady did not comprehend the whole—that she yet believed in human faith and truth—that she had trust in love and honor to the end—that she knew not how worthlessly her love had been bestowed. Perhaps it was so; for her eyes, beautiful and full of light, a moment earlier, were growing meaningless. Her lips parted: her breath came short: she staggered forward, reached the edge of the basin in which the fountain played, and then, with a wild unnatural shriek, fell to the ground. The spray dashed upon her face, but it revived her not; the birds carolled overhead, but she heard them not. Alarmed by the shriek, the servants rushed forth, found her, and raised her head; but she felt them not. A few convulsive movements and deep-drawn sighs, and all was over.

Lilla had died sooner and more silently, and there they lay, two lovely flowers blighted by one storm.

Her husband returned the following day, and found his home desolate. Rumor said that he went nearly frantic, and well he might, for the silver knife which he himself had given revealed how his wife had perished. But he was not frantic. He was as sorry as he could be for any thing; but he was soon consoled, and lived a happy and a prosperous man.

A NIGHT IN AN OLD CASTLE.

I. NIGHT IN AN OLD CASTLE.

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It was one of the most awful nights I ever remember having seen. We had set out from St. Goar in a carriage which we had hired at Cologne, drawn by two black horses, which proved as stubborn and strange a pair of brutes as man could undertake to drive. Not that I undertook it, for I wanted to see the Rhine from the land route, and not to weary my arms and occupy my attention with an unprofitable pair of dirty reins; but my friend, Mr. Lawrence, was rather fond of pulling at horses' mouths, and he preferred driving himself, and me too, to being troubled—bored he called it—with a coachman. The landlord of the "Adler" knew me well, and had no fear of trusting his horses with me, though, to say sooth, I had some fear of trusting myself with them.

They were assuredly a strange, unaccountable pair of brutes, and when the little baggage we took with us had been put in, and I went down to the carriage, I did not like the appearance of them at all. At first sight they

looked merely like a heavy pair of funeral horses, accustomed to nod their heads under heavy black plumes, and walk along at solemn pace with a mute before them; but when I came to examine their eyes, there was a sort of dull, unpleasant fire in them, and the one nearest turned round his head and stared at me out of the corner of his eye with a sort of supercilious, impertinent fun that I shall not easily forget. It seemed as if he were saying, "I'll give you a dance before I've done!" Then suddenly he stamped his foot upon the pavement of the inn yard, as if losing patience at my delay, and opening his fiery nostrils gave a great snort.

I got in, however, beside my friend, and away we went. As far as Bonn all was well enough; but there the horses insisted upon stopping to eat. Lawrence tried to persuade them it would be better to go on; but it was of no use: they had been accustomed to stop at the Star, and stop they would. We made the best of it, fed the horses, and got some dinner ourselves, and then we set out again.

The landlord of the Star saw us politely to the carriage, and, addressing my friend as he took the reins in hand, observed, in no very consolatory tone, "You had better take care of that horse, sir; he is the devil himself:" and so, on my word, I believe he was. Where he took us for the first five minutes I really do not know; but I have a remembrance of careering hither and thither about the great square, and having a running view of the University and the Palace of Popplesdorff. He would go any way on earth but up the Rhine. But Lawrence, who was really a very good whip, brought him to his senses at length, and that before he had knocked the

little crazy carriage all to pieces. Thus we were at length going along the high and proper road, at a speed dangerous to market men and women, and to our own necks; but even that at length was quieted down, and our further journey only suffered interruption from an occasional dart which both the horses would make at any diverging road that led away from the river, as if they had a presentiment that their course up the stream would lead to something strange and horrible. The instinct of brutes is a very curious subject of study. How far it is inferior, how far superior, to human reason—how much beyond man's keenest perception it goes—how near it approaches to the supernatural, are questions over which I have often pondered for hours.

We set out from St. Goar, then, with that same pair of horses, and the little rickety open carriage, on the 9th of October—a day ever-memorable to me. We were somewhat late, for we had been idling away our time in speculations vain enough; but it was a beautiful day. The Rhine was hurry with the vintage; all hearts seemed open as the wine gushed from the glorious clusters, and one could hardly help thinking leniently and sympathetically even of Noah and his first intemperance. Songs were breaking out from the hill-sides; the sun shone upon gay dresses and pleasant faces, and the merry laugh was often in the air. Oh! the Rhine land is a bright and pleasant land, especially in the gay season of the grape.

The horses that day seemed to have lost all their fire. It seemed as if it was their fate to go on whatever lay before them; and forward they dragged us at a slow, heavy trot, with drooping heads and heaving sides.

Even the one whom the landlord of the Star had called a devil was as tame as his companion, and minded the whip no more than if he had been tickled with a straw.

About three o'clock we saw a large heavy cloud begin to rise before us, overtopping the mountains, overshadowing the Rhine. It was only in hue that it bore the look of a thundercloud. It had no knobs, or pillars, or writhing twists about it; but it was inky black, and kept advancing like a wall of marble, dark as night at the lower part, and leaden-gray at the superior edge. The wind had lulled away to a perfect calm, but still that cloud kept marching on over the sky, absorbing into itself some light vapors that had been floating above over the blue, and gradually hiding the more distant hills, where we had caught a sight of them, in its own dim vail.

A light wind at length fluttered in our faces, hot and unrefreshing, like the breath of fever.

"Put up the hood!" said Lawrence, "we are going to have it!"

Hardly had he spoken when a bright flash burst from the cloud, and I could see a serpentlike line of fire dart across the Rhine. It nearly blinded one, but it had no effect upon the horses; they did not even start. Then came a clap of thunder which I thought would bring the rocks and mountains on our heads. There were two or three more such flashes, and two or three other roars, and then the giant began to weep. Down came the rain like fury: it seemed as if we had got into the middle of a water-spout; and the sky, too, grew so dark that an unnatural shadow filled the whole valley of the Rhine, late so bright and smiling. I thought that we were going

to have two of the plagues of Egypt at once—darkness that could be felt, and fire mingled with hail. Indeed they did come upon us at last. But no one can describe how that storm worked itself up. It was like one of those concerted pieces of music, beginning with a few instruments, and bringing in more and more, and louder and louder, till all seems one universal crash. Nor can one easily picture to imagination the change which came over the scene while all this went on. The rocks, the mountains, the castles, the towers—except those that were close by—were either shut out from sight completely, or appeared like dim spectres through the descending rain. The vineyards, with their gay population scattered, looked dank and dismal; the hills, in a thousand directions, were channeled by red, turbid cascades; and the black rocks seemed slimy and foul, with the oozing waters that trickled over their dark faces amidst the lichens and the weeds.

We were wet to the skin in five minutes; but as the thunder and lightning diminished—which they did toward sunset—the wind rose and blew with terrific violence, threatening to overset the carriage. The horses would hardly drag it on; and I am sure we did not go more than three miles an hour, while the rain, which continued harder than ever, was dashed furiously in our faces, nearly blinding both man and beast. At length, to complete our discomforts, night fell; and one so black and murky I have never seen. It was in vain whipping; neither horse would go the least out of his determined pace; and, besides, the whip had become so soaked and limp that it was of little service, moving as unwillingly

as the brutes themselves, and curling itself up into a thousand knots.

I got as far back in the carriage as I could, and said nothing. As for my companion he seemed at his wits' end, and I could hear muttered curses which might have well been spared, but which I was in no mood to reprove.

At length he said, "This will never do! I can not see a step before me. We shall meet with some accident. Let us get into the first place of shelter we can find. Any cottage, any roadside public-house or beer-house, is better than this."

"I do not think you will find any thing of the kind," I answered, gloomily; "if you do, I can be contented with any place to get out of this pelting—a cave in the rock if nothing better."

He drove on nearly at a walk for about two miles further, and then suddenly pulled up. I could hardly see any thing but a great black point of rock sticking out, as it seemed to me, right across the road. But Lawrence declared that he perceived a shed under the rock, and a building on the top of it, and asked me to get out and reconnoitre. I was as glad to catch at straws as he could be, and I alighted as well as I could, stumbling upon a large stone over which he had nearly driven us, and sinking deep in mud and mire. I now found that the rock which had seemed to block the way was only one of those many little points round which the river turns in its course through the mountains, and on approaching near it I discovered the shed he had seen. It was an old dilapidated timber-built hut, which might have belonged at some former period to a boat-

man, or perhaps a vine-dresser; but it was open at two sides, and we might as well have been in the carriage as there. By the side, however, I found a path with a step or two cut in the rock, and I judged rightly that it must lead to the building Lawrence had seen above. On returning to the side of the carriage, I clearly perceived the building too, and made it out to be one of the old castles of which such multitudes stud the banks of the frontier river. Some of these, as we all know, are in a very ruinous, some in a more perfect state; and I proposed to my companion to draw the horses and carriage under the shed, climb the path, and take our chance of what we should find above. Phaëton himself could not have been more sick of charioteering than Lawrence was: he jumped at the proposal. We secured our vehicle and its brutes as well as we could, and I began to climb. Lawrence staid a minute behind to get the portmanteau out from under the seat where we had stowed it to keep it dry; and then came hallooing after me with it upon his shoulder.

"Do you think there is a chance of finding any one up there?" he asked, as he overtook me.

"A chance, certainly; but a poor one," I answered. "Marxburg and one or two other old castles are inhabited; but not many. However, we shall soon know; for this one is low down, thank Heaven! and here we are at some gate or barbican."

I can not say that it was very promising to the feel —for sight aided us but little—and the multitude of stones we tumbled over gave no idea of the castle itself being in a high state of repair. Lawrence thought fit to give a loud halloo; but the whistling wind drowned

it—and would have drowned it, if he had shouted like Achilles from the trenches.

We next had to pick our way across what had probably been a court of the castle; that was an easy matter, for the stones in the open space were few, and the inequalities not many. The moon, I suppose, had risen by this time, for there seemed more light, though the rain ceased not; but we could now perceive several towers and walls quite plainly; and at length I found myself under a deep archway, on one side of which the drifting deluge did not reach me. Lawrence was by my side in a minute, and, thanks to what he was accustomed to jeer me for, as one of my old-bachelor habits, I was soon enabled to afford both him and myself some light. There are three things I always carry with me in traveling: a box of wax-wick matches—these are in my pocket well wrapped up in oil silk; a ball of string, and a couple of wax candles: the wax candles, I believe, once saved my life.

As soon as I got under shelter, I extracted my large box of matches and lighted one easily enough. It burned while one might count twenty, but that sufficed to show us that we were under a great gateway between two high towers. A second which I lighted Lawrence carried out into an inner court, but it was extinguished in a moment. I had perceived, however, a doorway on either side of this arch, and the spikes of a portcullis portruding through the arch above, which showed that the castle had some woodwork left about it; and as soon as he came back we lighted another match, and set out to explore what was behind the two doorways, which we managed easily by getting a new light as soon as the old

one was burned out. On the right there was nothing but one small room, with no exit but the entrance, and with a roof broken in and rank weeds rising from the encumbered floor. On the left was a room of the same size, equally dilapidated, but with a second door and two steps leading to a larger room or hall, the roof of which was perfect except at one end. There were two old lozenge-shaped windows likewise, minus a few panes; but the sills were raised nearly a man's height from the floor, and thus, when one was seated on the ground, one's head was out of the draught. Comparison is a wonderful thing, and the place looked quite comfortable. Lawrence threw down the portmanteau, and while he held a lighted match, I undid it and got out a wax candle. We had now the means of light till morning, and it remained to get some dry clothing, if it could be found. We had each a dress-suit and a couple of shirts in the portmanteau; and though the rain in one spot had contrived to penetrate the solid leather and wet the shoulder of my coat and the knee of his pantaloons, it was certainly better to have but one damp place of a few inches about one than to be wet all over. We therefore dressed ourselves in what the apprentice boys would call our best clothes, and a little brandy from the flask made us feel still more comfortable. The taste for luxuries increases with marvelous rapidity under indulgence. An hour before, we should have thought a dry coat and a place of shelter formed the height of human felicity, but now we began to long for a fire on the broad stone hearth at the end of the room. Lawrence was fertile in resources and keen-sighted enough. He had remarked a quantity of fallen rafters in the first little room we had entered,

and he now made sundry pilgrimages thither in the dark —for we dared not take out the candle—till he had accumulated enough wood to keep us dry all night. Some of it was wet and would not burn, but other pieces were quite dry, and we soon had a roaring fire, by which we sat down on the ground, hoping to make ourselves comfortable.

Oh the vanity of human expectations! As long as we had been busy in repairing our previous disasters we had been well enough; but as soon as we were still—no, not quite so soon as that, but by the time we had stared into the fire for ten minutes, and made out half a dozen pictures on the firebrands, miseries began to press upon us.

"I wish to heaven I had something to sit upon!" said Lawrence, "if it were but a three-legged stood. My knees get quite cramped."

"How the wind howls and mourns," said I, listening. "It would not surprise me if one half of this old crazy place were to come down upon our heads."

"The rain is pouring on as heavily as ever," said Lawrence. "I should not wonder if that puddle at the other end were to swell into a lake and wash us out at the door."

"Those poor brutes of horses," said I, "must have a bad time of it, and the chaise will be like a full sponge."

"Come, come!" said Lawrence, "this will never do. We shall croak ourselves into a fit of the horrors. Let us forget the storm, and the horses, and the old tumble-down place, and fancy ourselves in a middling sort of inn, with a good fire, but little to eat. It is the best

policy to laugh at petty evils. Come, can not you tell as a story beginning 'Once upon a time?'"

I was in no fit mood for story-telling, but there was some philosophy in his plan, and I accordingly agreed, upon the condition that when I had concluded my narrative he would tell another story.

"Once upon a time," I said, "when the late Duke of Hamilton was a young man, and traveling in Italy—making the grand tour, as it was called in those days—he came one night to a solitary inn in the mountains, where he was forced to take refuge from a storm something like that which we have met with to-day—"

"Oh, I know that story," cried Lawrence, interrupting me; "I have heard it a hundred times; and besides, you do not tell it right—My God, what is that?"

As he spoke, he sprang up on his feet with a look of consternation and a face turning suddenly pale.

"What? what?" I cried, "I heard nothing."

"Listen!" he said, "it was certainly a shriek."

We were silent as death for the next minute, and then again, rising above the moaning wind and pattering rain, came one of the most piercing, agonizing shrieks I ever heard. It seemed quite close to where we sat—driven in, as it were, through the broken panes of the casement.

"There must have been some accident," I said, anxiously. "Let us go down and see."

We had contrived to fix our candle between two pieces of firewood, and, leaving it burning, we hurried out through the little ante-room to the old dark archway. The night seemed blacker than ever, and the storm no less severe.

"Stay, stay!" said Lawrence; "let us listen. We hear nothing to direct us where to search."

I stopped, and we bent our ears in vain for another sound. We heard the wind sigh, and the rustling patter of the rain, and the roaring of the mighty river as, swollen tremendously, it went roaring along through its rocky channel, but nothing like a human voice made itself heard. At length, without giving me any warning, and making me start like a guilty spirit at the crow of cock, Lawrence shouted with the full force of his powerful lungs, inquiring if there was any one there and in distress. No answer was returned, and again and again he called without obtaining a reply. It was evident that the lips which had uttered those sounds of pain or terror were either far away or still in death; and having nothing to guide us further, we returned to our place of shelter. It was long, however, ere we could shake off the impression those two shrieks had made. We had neither of us become hardened, like Macbeth, to sounds of woe, and for some time we went on speculating on the occurrence, and supposing many things, with very little to guide us to a right judgment. There was the rushing Rhine and the slippery road, on which many an accident might happen, and there were almost as many perils imminent as those which St. Paul recapitulates as having overtaken himself. But there was nothing certain. After we had tired ourselves with such fancies Lawrence proposed a little more brandy. I did not object; and then we told tales of screams and shrieks which had been heard at different times and places by various credible witnesses—ourselves among the rest—for which no natural cause had ever been assigned.

At length, quite tired out, I proposed that we should try to sleep. Lawrence ensconced himself behind the door; I took up a position in the other corner, sitting on the floor with my back supported by the two walls, and at a sufficient distance from the window. I should have said we had piled more wood on the fire, in such a way as we hoped would keep it in at least till we woke; and it flickered and flared and cast strange lights upon the walls and old windows, and upon a door at the other end of the room which we had never particularly examined, on account of the wet and decayed state of the floor in that part. It was a very common door —a great mass of planks placed perpendicularly and bound together by two great horizontal bars—but as the fire-light played upon it, there was something unpleasant to me in its aspect. I kept my eyes fixed upon it, and wondered what was beyond; and, in the sort of unpleasant fancifulness which besets one sometimes when dreary, I began to imagine all sorts of things. It seemed to me to move as if about to be opened; but it was only the shaking of the wind. It looked like a prison door, I thought—the entrance to some unhappy wretch's cell; and when I was half asleep, I asked myself if there could be any one there still—could the shrieks we heard issue thence—or could the spirit of the tortured captive still come back to mourn over the sorrows endured in life? I shut my eyes to get rid of the sight of it; but when I opened them again, there it was staring me full in the face. Sometimes when the flame subsided indeed, I lost sight of it; but that was as bad or worse than the full view, for then I could not tell whether it was open or

shut. But at length, calling myself a fool, I turned away from it, and soon after dozed off to sleep.

I could not have been really in slumber more than an hour, and was dreaming that I had been carried off a road into a river, and just heard all the roaring and rushing of a torrent in my ears, when Lawrence woke me by shaking me violently by the shoulder, and exclaiming: "Listen, listen! What in the fiend's name can all that be?"

I started up bewildered; but in a moment I heard sounds such as I never heard before in my life; frantic yells and cries, and groans even—all very different from the shrieks we had heard before. Then, suddenly, there was a wild peal of laughter ringing all through the room, more terrible than the rest.

I can not bear to be woke suddenly out of my sleep; but to be woke by such sounds as that quite overcame me, and I shook like a leaf. Still, my eyes turned toward the door at the other end of the room. The fire had sunk low; the rays of our solitary candle did not reach it, but there was now another light upon it, fitful as the flickering of the flame, but paler and colder. It seemed blue almost to me. But as soon as I could recall my senses I perceived that the moon was breaking the clouds, and from time to time shining through the casement as the scattered vapors were hurried over her by the wind.

"What in Heaven's name can it be?" I exclaimed, quite aghast.

"I don't know, but we must see," answered my companion, who had been awake longer and recovered his presence of mind. "Light the other candle, and bring

the one that is alight. We must find out what this is. Some poor creature may be wanting help."

"The sound comes from beyond that door," I said: "let us see what is behind it."

I acknowledge I had some trepidation in making the proposal, but my peculiar temperament urged me forward in spite of myself toward scenes which I could not doubt were fearful; and I can boldly say that if Lawrence had hesitated to go I would have gone alone. It would seem as if Fate, in giving me this impulse toward sights painful to other men and to myself also, had prearranged the combinations which continually brought them in my way; and at this time of life I had learned to look upon it as a part of my destiny to find somewhere or other in my path at almost every step some of those events which make the heart sicken and the blood freeze.

Taking the candle in my hand, then, I advanced at once toward the door. Lawrence stopped a moment to examine by the light I had left behind a pair of pistols which he had brought in his pockets, and to put on fresh caps, although I believe they had escaped the rain. Thus I had reached the door before he came up, and had opened it, for all the iron-work but a latch had been carried off. The moment it was thrown back, the cries and groans were heard more distinctly than before; but I could see nothing before me but darkness, and it required a moment or two for the light to penetrate the darkness beyond. I had not taken two steps beyond the threshold ere Lawrence was by my side, and we found ourselves in a stone passage without windows, appearing to lead round the building. Ten paces on, however, we came to the top of a flight of steps, broken and mouldy,

with grass and weeds growing up between the crevices. Part of the wall had fallen there, but it was on the side away from the wind; and although the fluttering air, diverted by some obstacles from its course, caused the flame of the candle to waver, I carried it still lighted past the aperture. It was a work of some danger to descend those steps, for they rocked and tottered under the foot, and they seemed interminable; but after the first twenty had been passed we had no more to fear from wind. The masonry ceased; the walls became the solid rock, rudely hewn out for a passage for the stairs; and the steps themselves were of the native stone, squared and flattened at one time probably, but worn by many feet, and in some places broken, by what influences I do not know.

When we were about half way down, the sounds, which had been growing louder and louder, suddenly ceased, and a deathlike stillness succeeded.

"Stay a bit," said my companion: "let us reconnoitre. We may as well look before we leap. Hold up the light."

I did as he asked, but the faint rays of the candle showed us nothing but the black irregular faces of the rock on either side, a small rill of water percolating through a crevice, and flowing over, down upon the steps, along which it poured in miniature cascades, and beyond, a black chasm where we could see nothing.

"Come on," said Lawrence, advancing; "we must see the end of it."

Forward we went—down, down, some two-and-thirty steps more, without hearing another sound; but just as we reached the bottom step something gave a wild sort

of yell, and I could hear a scrambling and tumbling at a good distance in advance.

My heart beat terribly, and Lawrence stopped short. I was far more agitated than he was, but he showed what he felt more, and any one who had seen us would have said that he was frightened, I perfectly cool. He had passed me on the stairs; I now passed him, and holding the light high up gazed around.

It was very difficult to see any thing distinctly, but here and there the beams caught upon rough points of rock, and low arches rudely hewn in the dark stone, and I made out that we were in a series of vaults excavated below the castle, with massive partitions between them, and here and there a doorway or passage from one to the other. It seemed a perfect labyrinth at first sight, and now that all was silent again, we had nothing to guide us. I listened, but all was still as death; and I was advancing again, when my companion asked me to stop, and proposed that we should examine the ground on each side as we went on, marking the spot from which we started. It seemed a good plan, and I was stooping down to pile up some of the loose stones with which the ground or floor was plentifully encumbered, when a large black snake glided away, and at the same moment a bat or a small owl flitted by, and extinguished the light with its wings.

"Good Heaven, how unlucky!" cried Lawrence; "have you got the match-box?"

"No," I answered; "I left it on the floor near where I was sleeping. Feel your way up the steps, my good friend, and bring it and the other candle. I will remain here till you come. Be quick!"

"You go; let me stay," said Lawrence. But I was ashamed to accept his offer; and there was a something, I knew not what, that urged me to remain. "No, no," I said, "go quickly; but give me one of your pistols," and I repeated the last words in German, lest any one who understood that language should be within ear-shot.

We were so near the foot of the steps that Lawrence could make no mistake, and I soon heard his feet ascending at a rapid rate, tripping and stumbling, it is true, but still going on. As I listened, I thought I heard a light sound also from the other side, but I concluded that it was but the echo of his steps through the hollow passages, and I stood quite still, hardly breathing. I could hear my heart beat, and the arteries of the throat were very unpleasant—throb, throb, throbbing.

After a moment or two I heard Lawrence's feet as it seemed to me almost above me, and I know not what impression of having some other being near me, made me resolve to cock the pistol. I tried to do it with my thumb as I held it in my right hand, but the lock went hard, and I found it would be necessary to lay down the candle to effect it. Just as I was stooping to do so, I became suddenly conscious of having some living creature close by me; and the next instant I felt cold fingers at my throat, and an arm thrown round me. Not a word was spoken, but the grasp became tight upon my neck, and I struggled violently for breath and life. But the strength of the being that grasped me seemed gigantic, and his hand felt like a hand of iron.

Oh what a moment was that! Never, except in a terrible dream, have I felt any thing like it. I tried to cry, to shout, but I could not, his hold of my throat

was so tight; power of muscle seemed to fail me; my head turned giddy; my heart felt as if stopping; flashes of light shone from my eyes.

My right hand, however, was free, and by a violent effort I forced back the cock of the pistol nearly to the click; but then I lost all power. The hammer fell; the weapon went off with a loud echoing report, and for an instant, by the flash, I saw a hideous face, with a gray beard, close gazing into mine.

The sound of Lawrence's footsteps running rapidly overhead were the most joyful I had ever heard; but the next instant I felt myself cast violently backward, and I fell half stunned and bewildered to the ground.

Before I could rise, the light of the candle began to appear, as Lawrence came down the stairs, first faint, and then brighter; and I heard his voice exclaiming, "What has happened? what has happened?"

"Take care!" I cried, faintly; "there is some man or some devil here, and he has half killed me!"

Looking carefully around, Lawrence helped me to rise, and then we picked up the candle I had let fall and lighted it again, he gazing in my face from time to time, but seeming hardly to like to take his eyes off the vaults, or to enter into any conversation, for fear of some sudden attack. Nothing was to be seen, however; my savage assailant was gone, leaving no trace behind him but a cut upon the back of my head, received as he cast me backward.

"What has happened?" said Lawrence, at length, in a very low voice. "Why, your face looks quite blue, and you are bleeding!"

"No wonder," I answered; "for I have been half

strangled, and have nearly had my brains dashed out. Have you got powder and ball? If so, load the pistol;" and giving it to him, I sat down on the last step of the stairs to recover myself a little, keeping a wary eye upon the gloom beyond him while he re-charged the weapon.

From time to time he asked a question, and I answered, till he had heard all that had happened, and then, after a minute's thought, he said, "Do you know, I think we had better give this up, and barricade ourselves into the room up-stairs. There may be more of these ruffians than one."

"No, no," I answered; "I am resolved to see the end of it. There is only one, depend upon it, or I should have had both upon me. We are two, and can deal with him at all events. I have a great notion that some crime has been committed here this night, and we ought to ascertain the facts. Those first shrieks were from a woman's voice."

"Well, well," answered my companion, "I am with you, if you are ready. Here, take one light and one pistol, and you examine the right-hand vaults while I take the left. We are now on our guard, and can help each other."

We walked on accordingly, very slowly and carefully, taking care to look round us at every step, for the vaults were very rugged and irregular, and there was many a point and angle which might have concealed an assailant, but we met with no living creature. A length I thought I perceived a glimmer of light before me, but a little to the left, and calling up Lawrence, who was at some yards' distance, I pointed it out to him.

"To be sure I see it," he answered; "it is the moon

shining. We must be near the entrance of the vaults. But what is that? There seems to be some one lying down there."

He laid his hand upon my arm as he spoke, and we both stood still and gazed forward. The object toward which his eyes were directed certainly looked like a human figure, but it moved not in the least, and I slowly advanced toward it. Gradually I discerned what it was. There was the dress of a woman, gay colored and considerably ornamented, and a neat little foot and shoe, with a small buckle in it, resting on a piece of fallen rock. The head was away from us, and she lay perfectly still.

My spirit felt chilled; but I went on, quickening my pace, and Lawrence and I soon stood beside her, holding the lights over her.

She was a young girl of nineteen or twenty, dressed in gala costume, with some touch of the city garb, some of the peasant attire. Her hair, which was all loose, wet, and disheveled, was exceedingly rich and beautiful, and her face must have been very pretty in the sweet happy coloring of health and life. Now it was deathly pale, and the windows of the soul were closed. It was a sad, sad sight to see! Her garments were all wet, and there was some froth about the mouth; but the fingers of the hands were limp and natural, as if there had been no struggle, and the features of the face were not distorted. There was, however, a wound upon her temple, from which some blood had flowed, and some scratches upon her cheek, and upon the small fair ears.

She looked very sweet as she lay there, and Lawrence and I stood and gazed at her long. Her dress was some-

what discomposed, and I straightened it over her ankles, though the sense of modesty and maiden shame had gone out with all the other gentle harmonies in that young heart.

How came she by her death? How came she there? Was she slain by accident, or had she met with violence? were questions that pressed upon our thoughts. But we said little then, and after a time left her where we found her. It mattered not to her that the bed was hard or the air cold.

We searched every corner of the vaults, however, for him I could not help believing her murderer, but without success: and on going to the mouth of the vault, where there had once been a door, long gone to warm some peasant's winter hearth, we found that it led out upon the road close by the side of the Rhine, and hardly a dozen paces from the river.

It was clear how he had escaped; and we sadly took our way back to the chamber above, where we passed the rest of the night in melancholy talk over the sad events that must have happened.

We slept no more, nor tried to sleep; but as soon as the east was gray went down to the shed where we had left the horses, and resumed our journey, to give information at the next village of what we had discovered.

The horses were very stiff, and at first could hardly drag us along, for the road was in a horrible state, but they soon warmed to the work, and in little more than three quarters of an hour we reached a small village, where we got some refreshment, while the landlord of the little Gasthaus ran at my request for the Polizei.

When the only officer in the place came I told him

every thing that had happened in the best German I could muster, and willingly agreed to go back with him to the spot, and show him where the body lay. The rumor spread like wildfire in the village; a crowd of the good peasantry collected round the door; and when we set out, taking a torch or two with us, as I described the vaults as very dark, we had at least a hundred persons in our train, among whom were a number of youths and young girls. As nothing but one old chaise was to be procured in the village, and it did not look as if it would rain, we pursued our way on foot, but we certainly accomplished the distance faster than we had done with two horses in the morning. All the way the officer —I really do not know his right German title—continued conversing with Lawrence, who did not understand a word of German, and with myself, for whom his German was a world too fast. I gave him, however, all the information I could, and as his language has the strange peculiarity of being easier to speak than to understand, I made him master, I believe, of every little incident of the last eventful night.

My description of the face of the man who had first nearly strangled me and then nearly dashed my brains out, and of whom I had caught a glimpse by the flash of the pistol, seemed to interest him more than all the rest. He stopped when I gave it to him, called several of the girls and young men about him, and conversed with them for a moment or two with a good deal of eagerness. The greater part of what they said escaped me, but I heard a proper name frequently repeated, sounding like Herr Katzenberger, and the whole ended with a sad and gloomy shake of the head.

Soon after we resumed our advance we came to the mouth of the vault. It required no torches, however, to let us see what we sought for. The sun, still low, was shining slantingly beneath the heavy brows of the rocky arch, and the rays receded to the spot where the body of the poor girl lay.

All steps were hurried as we came near; and boys and girls, men and women, crowded round. It was evident that every one present recognized a friend in that lifeless form. "*Ach, die Çarlina!*" — "*Ach, die arme Carlina!*" arose from a hundred voices; and some eyes were seen to shed bitter tears.

They made a little bier of vine poles and branches, and laid the fair corpse upon it. Then they sought for various green leaves and some of the long-lingering autumn flowers, and strewed them tastefully over the body; and then four stout men raised the death-litter on their shoulders and bore it away toward the village. The men and women, without noise or bustle, formed themselves into a little procession, with a native sense of reverent decorum which is more strongly felt among the German peasantry than among any other people I ever met with, and followed the corpse, two and two.

I had the policeman for my companion; and beseeching him to speak slowly, I asked if he could give me any explanation of the strange and terrible events which must have happened.

"We know very little as yet," he answered; "but we shall probably know more soon. This young lady, poor thing! was the only daughter of a rich but cross-grained man, living at a village a short way further down the Rhine, on the other side. Her mother, who died three

years ago, was from our own village. She was dancing away gayly last evening with our young folks, just before the storm came on; for her father had brought her up in his boat, and left her at her aunt's. When it came on with thunder and lightning, they all went into the house, and, as misfortune would have it, that young lad who is carrying the head of the bier sat down by her in a corner, and they could not part soon enough. He was a lover of hers, every one knew; but her father was hard against the match, and before they had been in the house an hour the old man came in and found them chatting in their corner. Perhaps he would have staid all night had it not been for that; but he got very angry, and made her go away with him in his boat in the very midst of the storm. He said he had been on the Rhine many a worse night than that—though few of us have ever seen one. But he was obstinate as a bull, and away they went, though she cried terribly, both from fear and vexation. What happened after, none of us can tell; but old Herr Katzenberger has a gray beard, just such as you speak of."

They carried the body to the little old church, and laid it in the aisle; and then they sent for the village doctor to examine into the mode of her death. I was not present when he came, but I heard afterward that he pronounced her to have died from drowning, and declared that the wound on the temple must have occurred by a blow against some rock when life was quite or nearly extinct. "Otherwise," he said, "it would have bled much more, for the artery itself was torn."

For my part, I was marched up with Lawrence to the Amthaus, and there subjected to manifold interro-

gatories, the answers to which were all carefully taken down.

In the midst of these we were interrupted by the inroad of a dozen of peasants, dragging along a man who struggled violently with them, but in whom every one present recognized the father of the poor girl whose body we had found. The peasants said they had found him some six miles off, tearing his flesh with his teeth, and evidently in a state of furious insanity. They had found it very difficult to master him, they declared, for his strength was prodigious.

He was the only witness of what had taken place during that terrible night upon the river, and he could give no sane account. He often accused himself of murdering his child; but the good people charitably concluded that he merely meant he had been the cause of her death by taking her upon the treacherous waters in such a night as that; and the fact of his boat having drifted ashore some miles further down, broken and bottom upward, seemed to confirm that opinion. I made some inquiries regarding the unfortunate man during a subsequent tour; but I only learned that he continued hopelessly insane, without a glimmer of returning reason.

Dessau, Printed by Katz Brothers.

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James, G. P. R.,

The Cavalier A historical romance

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